

# VOICE FROM THE VINTAGE

ON THE

*Force of Example,*

ADDRESSED TO

THOSE WHO THINK AND FEEL

BY THE

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BY THE

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# VOICE FROM THE VINTAGE.

## CHAPTER I.

### PECULIARITIES OF INTEMPERANCE AS A VICE.

IF the physician, on taking charge of an invalid, should simply employ himself in laying down rules for the preservation of perfect health, it is evident that his advice would be of but little service in the removal of any existing disease under which his patient might be labouring. His rules might be excellent, his theory correct; but how would such a patient benefit by either? His malady would require the application of some direct and practical remedy, before he could be in a situation

to take advantage of any method, however excellent, for the preservation of perfect health.

It is thus with the moral, as well as the physical maladies of mankind. It would be a comparatively easy and pleasant task to lay down rules for the preservation of sobriety, order, and happiness, provided they had never been interrupted; but when evil habits have once gained the ascendancy, and the moral harmony of society has been destroyed, there must be a corrective employed to check what is evil, before any incentive can efficiently operate in promoting what is good.

Although the *exceeding sinfulness of sin* precludes all idea of there being in the Divine sight, any degree, or modification in the nature of sin itself; yet with regard to particular vices as they come under human observation, there are certain points of distinction which demand particular attention, and require appropriate treatment, as we see by the variety of regulations instituted for the well-

being of society, and the still greater variety of systems of moral discipline brought into exercise for the purpose of controlling the evil tendencies of our common nature.

None who have ever been truly awakened to a sense of the all-sufficient power of religious influence upon the human heart, will be liable to suppose, that any mode or system of moral discipline, simply as such, can be effectual in its operation upon the life and character, so as, ultimately, to secure the salvation of the soul; but as a child is carefully taught that truth and kindness are good, and falsehood and cruelty evil, long before it knows any thing of the religion of the Bible; so, in the case of every particular vice which has been known in the world, it may fairly be said to be better that it should be given up, than continued; provided only, it cannot be overcome except by the substitution of another. It is no small point gained, when an immortal being, a fellow traveller in the journey of life,

is prevailed upon to cease to do evil in any one respect. He is, at least, in a better condition for learning to do well, than while persisting in his former course.

If a child, a servant, or any one under our care, has been accustomed to tell falsehoods, we rejoice over the first symptoms of their having learned to fear a lie, even though their conduct should evince no other indication of a moral change. We do not say, "Let him return to the evil of his ways, for it is of no use his leading a stricter life in this respect, unless he becomes altogether a changed character." We do not say this, because we know that the well-being of society, and the good of every individual connected with him, require that he should give up this particular habit, and if for no other reason, we think it sufficient that it should be given up for this—that the tendency of all evil is to contaminate, and that no vice can exist alone, but if indulged will necessarily extend itself, and

pollute whatever it comes in contact with, by this means producing innumerable poisonous fruits from one deleterious root. Thus the state of society is proportionally improved every time a vicious habit is wholly given up; and if this be true of vice in general, how eminently is it the case with that of intemperance; because there is no other, which, on the one hand, is so countenanced by the customs of the world, and which, on the other, spreads its baneful influence to so fearful and deadly an extent.

Intemperance is the only vice in the dark catalogue of man's offences against the will, and the word, of his Maker, which directly assails the citadel of human reason, and by destroying the power to choose betwixt good and evil, renders the being whose similitude was originally divine, no longer a moral agent, but a mere idiot in purpose, and animal in action. The man who is habitually intemperate consequently makes a voluntary surrender of all control over his own conduct, and lives for the

greater portion of his time deprived of that highest attribute of man—his rational faculties. It is, however, a fact, deserving our most serious consideration, that in this state he is more alive, than under ordinary circumstances, to the impulse of feeling, and of passion; so that while on the one hand he has less reason to instruct him how to act, on the other he has more restlessness and impetuosity to force him into action.

It has been calculated that of persons thus degraded, there are at the present time existing in Great Britain more than six hundred thousand, of whom sixty thousand die annually, the wretched victims of this appalling vice.

Such, then, is the peculiarity of intemperance, that while all other vices leave the mind untouched and the conscience at liberty to detect and warn of their commission, this alone subdues the reasoning powers, so that they have no capability of resistance; and while all other vices are such from their earliest com-

incommencement, this alone only begins to be a vice at that precise point when the clearness of the mind, and the activity of the conscience, begin to fail; and thus it progresses, according to the generally received opinion, by increasing in culpability in the exact proportion by which mental capability and moral power are diminished.

What an extraordinary measurement of guilt is this for an enlightened world to make! In all other cases a man's culpability is measured precisely by the ability he has to detect evil, and the power he possesses to withstand temptation. In this alone he is first encouraged by society, and this is while his natural powers remain unimpaired. No blame attaches to him then. He is a fit companion for wise and good men: but no sooner does his reason give way than he is first slightly censured by society, then shunned, then despised, and finally abhorred; just according to the progressive stages by which he has become less



capable of understanding what is right, and controlling his own inclinations to what is wrong.

It is another striking feature in the character of intemperance as a vice, that it commences not only under the sanction of the law, but under that of what is called the best society; not only under the sanction of the world, but under that of religious professors, who believe themselves called out of darkness into light. It begins with the first welcome which kind and Christian friends assemble to give to a young immortal being, just ushered into a state of probation, by which it is to be fitted for eternity; and it extends through all the most social and cheering, as well as through many of the most lasting and sacred associations we form on earth; until at last, when the tie is broken, and the grave receives our lost and loved, the solemn scene is closed, and the mourner's heart is soothed, by the commencement of intemperance.

I say the commencement, for who can tell at

what draught, what portion of a draught, what drop, for it must really come to this—who can say, then, at what drop of the potent cup sobriety ceases, and intemperance begins? The intemperate man himself cannot tell, for it has justly been observed, that “instead of feeling that he is taking too much, his only impression is, that he has not had enough.”

Who then shall warn him? Even if he were in a condition to listen to remonstrance, who should be his judge? If it be perfectly innocent, nay right, in the first instance to partake of this beverage, say to the extent of two thousand drops; if all sorts of persons, up to the highest scale of religious scrupulosity, take this quantity, and more, and deem it right to take it, even to double or treble it as occasion may demand, it must be strong evidence that quantity, as regards a few thousand drops, can be of little consequence. Still there is, there must be a precise point at which mankind ought to stop, or

why is the unanimous voice of society lifted up against the intemperate? But why, above all, are we told that no drunkard can *enter the kingdom of Heaven*?

Ask this question of a hundred persons, and they will in all probability each give you a different account of the measurement by which they ascertain at what point intemperance begins; because there are all the different habits and constitutions of mankind to be taken into account, as well as all the different degrees of potency in the intoxicating draught, according to its name and quality. Of twenty persons seated at the same table, and regaling themselves with the same wine, it is more than probable that the fatal drop at which intemperance begins, would not be in the same glass with any two amongst them. Who then shall decide this momentous question? for it is momentous, since eternal condemnation depends upon it. Let us reduce the number of persons, and see whether by this means the

case will be made more clear. We will suppose, then, that three persons sit down to table to take their wine, or whatever it may be, in what is called an innocent and social way. Out of this small number, it is possible that one may commit a deadly sin without taking more than the others. Yet to him it is sin, simply because the drop of transition between good and evil, from the peculiar constitution of his bodily frame, occurs in his glass at an earlier stage than it does with the others. These three men, consequently, rise from that table according to the opinion of the world in a totally different moral state, for one ~~has~~ been guilty of a degrading vice, and the others are perfectly innocent. Yet all have done the same thing. Who then, I would ask again, is to decide in such a case. I repeat, it cannot be the guilty man himself, because that very line which constitutes the minute transition between a state of innocence and a state of sin, is the same at which he ceased

to be able clearly to distinguish between one and the other.

It is impossible, then, that this question should ever be decided, unless every one who indulges in the use of such beverage would take the trouble to calculate the exact distance between the extremes of sobriety and intoxication, not only computed by every variety of liquid in which alcohol is contained, but by every variety of bodily sensation which he may be liable to experience. This calculation will bring him to one particular point, which may not improperly be called the point of transition, at which positive evil begins, and beyond which it is a positive sin to go. Who, then, I ask again, shall fix this point? It must of necessity be left to the calculations of the man whose inclination in the hour of temptation is *not* to see it, whose desire is to step over it, and whose perceptions at that time are so clouded and obscured, that he could not ascertain it if he would.

Here, then, we see a marked difference betwixt intemperance and every other vice. Theft, for instance, is as much theft at the beginning as it is at the end; and if a case should occur in which there was any doubt about the act being really such, reason might immediately be applied to as unimpaired; nor would any other of the faculties of the mind have suffered in the slightest degree from the commission of a dishonest deed. Neither are there any degrees of theft openly countenanced by the world, and by religious society. We will not say that there are not tricks in trade, and dishonest practices which exist to the discredit of our country and our profession, but they are chiefly done in secret, and acknowledged, at least in the pulpit, to be wrong.

Another characteristic of intemperance is, that it often begins in what are considered the happiest and most social moments of a person's life. It begins when the hospitable

board is spread, and when friend meets friend; when the winter's fire is blazing; when the summer's ramble is finished; on the eve of parting, when moments glide away with the preciousness of hours; when hearts warm towards each other; when broken confidence is restored; when the father welcomes back his son; and when the young and trusting bride first enters her new home. All these, and tens of thousands of associations, all as tender, and some of them more dear, are interwoven with our recollections of the tempting draught, which of itself demands no borrowed sweets.

How different from this are all other vices. Injurious to society in the first instance, as well as in the last, selfish in their own nature, and avowedly abhorred, they no sooner appear in their naked form, than a check is put upon them by the united voice of society. The thief is not welcomed into the bosom of kind families after he has been known to

steal a *little*. The miser, whose evil propensities are, next to intemperance, the most insidious in their nature, is spurned and hated before his failing has become a vice. And so it is with all who sin in other ways. They are acknowledged to be dangerous as companions, and injurious as citizens, in the commencement of their guilt. It is only by denying a knowledge of their actual conduct, that they are supported and countenanced even by their friends. *So far as they are acknowledged* to be guilty, they are condemned, though having sinned but a *little*; while the victim of intemperance alone carries with him the sanction of society long after the commencement of his career; nay, he drinks of the very same bowl with the religious professor until he has lost the power to refrain.

The victim of intemperance may have originally sat down to the same cheering draught as the religious man. He may have



been his friend. But it so happens that his constitution of body is different. With him the transition point occurs at an earlier period than with the other. He passes this without being aware of his danger, and his mastery over himself is lost. What horror then seizes the religious man, not against himself for having partaken with his friend, but against that friend for having gone too far. Had he begun with him to commit a little theft, or to tell a slight falsehood, and his friend had gone too far, he would have blamed himself for the remainder of his life for being accessory to the downfall of that friend; but here he starts back, considers himself, and is considered by others, as perfectly innocent; while his friend, who has committed nothing but a *little more* of the very same act, is shunned as degraded, and denounced as guilty.

The voice of society is most injurious, and unfair, with regard to intemperate persons. They are classed together as belonging to

the lowest grade of human beings, frequenters of vicious haunts, and perpetrators of every abomination. It is a melancholy truth that such for the most part they *become*; but it is equally true, that many, if not most of them, have been thinned out from the ranks of honest and of honourable men, whose principles and habits were precisely the same as their own, in the first instance, but whose bodily constitution, and whose powers of self mastery, were stronger, and who thus happened to remain on the safe side of the transition line.

I would not, for an instant, be supposed to doubt the efficacy of constant watchfulness, under the influence of religious principle; and, above every other consideration, the all-sufficient power of that Divine assistance, which alone can be expected in answer to fervent and heartfelt prayer. I would not insinuate a doubt that thousands have not been prevented by this means from going

too far, even under the critical circumstances already described. But I speak of people generally—of society as it is constituted—of things as they *are*; and I speak under the conviction, that, notwithstanding all the efforts of ministers of religion, and of zealous and devoted friends to the promotion of the Gospel of Christ, some additional effort is required, and some other means are necessary, in order to rescue from destruction the thousands who now fill the ranks of intemperance, and the thousands beyond these, who, from cultivating the same habits, are following unconsciously in the same fatal course.

There is another important point of difference betwixt the victims of intemperance and those who are addicted to any other vice. The dishonest man begins his guilty course with a meanness of purpose, and a degradation of soul, which mark him out as a stain upon the society of which he forms a part.

The miser cherishes, along with his thirst for gold, a hardness, a grudging, and sometimes a hatred against his fellow-beings. And so it is throughout the whole catalogue of evil, which marks the downward progress of degraded and guilty men. They are guilty and polluted even before the vices to which they addict themselves are committed. They are guilty before the world, and obnoxious to the open censure of society, just in proportion as they have harboured a thought, a conception, or a design, inimical to its well-being, and destructive of its peace. But the intemperate man begins his career with no such malevolent feeling. He begins it, most frequently, without a wrong intention at all; and is often—alas! too often—the kindest of the kind, the favourite guest, the beloved companion of those who cheerfully accompany him along the first stage of his dangerous career. It is, however, the most lamentable feature in his case, that although he may thus

begin with a noble, generous, and affectionate heart, he invariably *becomes* mean, selfish, and even cruel.

An impartial observation of the world will, I believe, support me, when I repeat, that the habitually intemperate are, for the most part, persons who have been originally social, benevolent, and tender-hearted, lovers of their fellow-men, of cordial meetings, and of those gatherings together of congenial spirits, which it would be impossible for a harder and less feeling nature so fully to enjoy. They are persons who from excessive sensibility to pain and pleasure are liable to be too much elated by the one, and depressed by the other, for their own peace—persons to whom enjoyment is too intense, and suffering too wretched, to be experienced with equanimity of mind—to whom a social hour with chosen friends is absolute felicity, and a wounded spirit death.

To such the intoxicating draught has ever

been the strongest temptation, because, while on the one hand, it seemed for the moment to heighten every pleasure, on the other it has, for a season equally transient, the power of smoothing off the edge of every pain.

Again, we all know the force with which certain bodily diseases operate upon the mind; we know that the sensation of perfect health is enlivening to the mental faculties, and even cheering to the soul. In this state we can form and execute plans of which we should have been incapable under certain kinds of sickness, even had the power of action been unimpaired. Thus the mind is in a great degree dependant upon the body, and especially those functions of the body with which nervous sensation is most intimately connected. In a state of nervous disorder, the powers of perception, judgment, and decision, are so far deranged, that even conscience ceases to exercise a just and lawful influence, and ideas are conceived, and actions performed, under a

total incapacity for clearly distinguishing right from wrong.

Inebriation, from the effect it produces upon the stomach and the brain, has a more instantaneous influence upon the nervous system, and consequently upon the mind, than any other disease. There are, of course, degrees of this influence, beginning first with the slightly pleasurable sensation which some persons experience after drinking a single glass of wine, and extending to the last and fatal draught of the poor outcast from respectable society. It is often asked, why does not the drunkard stop? and he is sometimes most severely blamed for taking too much, by those who take only a little less. But how should he stop, when his mind has lost its healthy tone in consequence of the particular state of his body?—when he ceases to be capable of distinguishing betwixt good and evil, and cares not for any consequences that may come upon him? How should he

stop? It is a mockery of common sense, and an insult to common feeling, to suppose that of himself, and unaided, he should have the power to do so. At that critical moment he has not even the *wish* to stop. So far from it, his inclination is on the opposite side, and the whole force of his animal nature, with an excess of bodily appetite, are increasing on the side of evil, in the same proportion that his mental capabilities, his conscience, and his power of self-mastery, are becoming weaker on the side of good.

And this is the man of whom the world judges so hardly, because he has passed unconsciously the forbidden line—because he has never been able to ascertain exactly where it was—and, most probably, because from some natural constitution of body, the same draught which was safely drunk by another, was one of fearful peril to him.

The original construction of the bodily frame has much to do with the diseases to



which we are liable through the whole of our lives. There are hereditary tendencies which the skill of the physician, the care of the parent, and the advice of the friend are strenuously exerted to correct. In no case are hereditary tendencies more striking than in the children of intemperate parents. It is true the very excess, and consequent ruin of one generation, not unfrequently tend to place certain individuals of the next more scrupulously upon their guard against the same lamentable fate, and ultimate safety often depends upon an early apprehension of danger. But there is in the bodily constitution of such families a peculiar liability which ought to render them the objects of the tenderest sympathy, and the most watchful care to others. There is in their very nature, if once excited, an aching want of that stimulus, which even a very slight degree of intoxication supplies; and when once this want is gratified, it increases to such a degree, as to resemble

a consuming fire, whose torment nothing can alleviate, but constant libations of the same deadly draught.

Now it is quite impossible we should know, when mixing in general society, where and when we may meet with individuals of this constitutional tendency; for even with children of the most respectable parents, it sometimes prevails to an alarming extent. Perhaps we sit down to table with twenty persons, and amongst them is one of those to whom the cup of which others are drinking, as they believe innocently, is the cup of poison and of death. Perhaps that one is a father's hope, or the only child of a widowed mother, or the beloved and betrothed of a young and trusting heart, about to become the father of a family, the head of a household, and himself in his turn an example and a guide to others. His friends drink with him. They all partake in safety, but within his bosom the latent elements of destruction are set on fire, and he

plunges headlong into shame, and misery, and ruin. To a certain extent his friends have gone along with him. They have even pressed and encouraged him to partake; but no sooner do they perceive that he has overstepped a certain dubious and almost imperceptible limit—or in other words, that his bodily frame has not been able to sustain what they have borne uninjured—than they turn from him, and acknowledge him no more as a companion and a friend. They are, in fact, ashamed to be seen with him. He loses caste amongst them, becomes a marked man, and is finally left to perish as an object of disgust and loathing, too gross to be reclaimed, and too low for pity.

Nor is it with those who are constitutionally liable alone that this bodily tendency exists. The habit of intemperance itself creates it; and thousands who have begun their ruinous career, simply out of compliance with the usages of society, and not a few who have

done so under medical advice, have acquired, for certain kinds of stimulants, and sometimes for all, an habitual craving, which they have ultimately sacrificed every other consideration to gratify. How do we know then, in mixing with society, but that we are sitting down to table with some individual who has just arrived at the turning point in this career? One who has just begun to suspect his own danger, who is hanging, as the weak always do, upon the example of others, and looking especially to religious people, to see what sanction they may give to an indulgence for which he is ever in search of an excuse? How do we know, amongst the many with whom we associate, and whose private history is untold to us—how do we know whose eyes may be fixed upon us, with anxious hope that we shall go along with them in the course they are so desirous to pursue, though they would still wish to pursue it without condemnation or guilt. Now, if these eyes should be

beaming from a young and trusting heart, unconscious of the whole extent of the danger, and fondly believing that safety dwells with us, but more especially if they beam from the fair countenance of woman—oh, if at the same moment we could look upon the misery and the guilt that would ensue to the being thus regarding us, and thus plunging into perdition from our example, what should we say to the Christian man or woman, who could esteem a trifling act of self-denial—of mere bodily privation—as too great a sacrifice to be made on such an occasion!

“Oh, but!” the indignant exclamation is, “we do not meet with persons of this kind in respectable society. *We* do not sit down with such at table. The haunts of vice are where they resort. *We* can have nothing to do with their excesses.” From whence then has come that degraded figure, with his tattered garments, yet with the air of gentility still about him? From whence has come

that wretched female, shrinking from the public gaze, as if the remembrance of her childhood, and the honoured roof beneath which her girlish footsteps trod, was yet too strong for that burning fire to consume, or that fatal flood to drown? Amongst the six hundred thousand victims of intemperance now in existence, are there not many such as these?—many who have known what it was to be respectably brought up, who had better thoughts, and purer feelings, in their youth, and who shrunk, as we do now, with horror and disgust from the contemplation of a figure presenting such a wreck of humanity as theirs?

But acknowledging that these six hundred thousand persons are already lost—that their doom is sealed—that they are beyond the reach of our influence, and beneath even our charity to pity as we pass them by—acknowledging what is a well-authenticated fact, that sixty thousand of these die an-

nually—what shall we say of the sixty thousand who will, during the course of this year, come forward to supply their place in the ranks of intemperance? Let us pause a moment to contemplate the awful fact, that unless rescued from destruction by some extraordinary interposition of Divine Providence, there will be sixty thousand persons entered upon the list of intemperance during the present year, and that an equal number, before twelve months have passed, will have died the death of those of whom it is clearly stated, that none can enter the kingdom of heaven!

Yet, after all, the actual death of these persons, violent, and distressing, and hopeless as such deaths generally are—their actual death must not be considered as by any means the extent of the evil of intemperance in any single case. I have already stated, that although intemperance often begins with unconsciousness of evil, in connexion with social

feeling, and benevolence of heart, and often, too, with high intellectual advantages, it almost invariably ends in every species of degradation to which human nature is liable—in falsehood, meanness, profanity, and every description of vice. Thus there is a bad atmosphere surrounding each one of these individuals, which taints, and often poisons, the moral feelings of those who breathe within it. Besides which, every one who feels himself to have overstepped what the world considers as the bounds of propriety, feels an interest in drawing others down along with him into the same gulf. His influence is consequently exerted over the unwary, the trusting, and the weak, and often exerted in such a manner, that his death, awful as that might be, would still be a blessing, by comparison, to those he would leave behind.

And what shall we say in addition to all this, of the sum of misery by which our land is deluged, of the thousands of widows, and



tens of thousands of orphans, the broken-hearted women and the destitute children, the household happiness destroyed, and the golden promises blighted, for which we have to blame the drinking habits of our country, habits which are still sanctioned in the commencement by the respectable, and even the religious part of the community? What shall we say of the waste of precious hours, which has been computed at the rate of "fifty millions per annum, lost to this country merely from the waste of time, and consequent loss of labour, owing to habits of intemperance?" What shall we say to the "loss of useful lives and valuable property from the same cause, on the land by fires, and other casualties, and on the sea by shipwrecks?" What shall we say to all these facts, for they are such—and British women, however high their station, or refined their sensibilities, ought to know that they are so—facts written on the page of eternity, for which time, the very

time in which we live, will have to render its long and fearful account.

But let us not be discouraged by dwelling too long upon some of the dark pictures which this view of human life presents. Even this melancholy page has its bright side, to which we turn with gratitude and hope; for is it not our privilege to live in a state of society amongst which has sprung up an association of love, whose banner is a refuge for the destitute under which all may unite—the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak—for the purpose of arresting the fearful progress of intemperance, and encouraging those who, under bodily suffering and mental depression, are struggling to escape from the fatal grasp of this gigantic and tyrant foe? Yes, it is an unspeakable privilege to live at the same time that such an association is gaining ground on every hand, enlisting numbers, and gathering strength, as we fervently believe, under the blessing of Divine Providence, from the same

source as that which inspired the Apostle, when he pledged himself to act upon the principle which has become the basis of this association for the removal of intemperance—  
*“Wherefore, said he, if meat cause my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.”*

“Occasions for displaying the same generous disregard of selfish considerations, for the benefit of others, frequently occur; and instances of such disinterestedness are not so rare in the Christian world as to be matters of wonder. But perhaps never, until the present age, has this principle been made the motto of a great action of philanthropy; never before did thousands unite together for the moral benefit of their fellow-men, by means of an express abridgment of their own liberty of indulgence. And, after all that has been pointed out as distinguishing this remarkable period, perhaps nothing is more worthy of being regarded as its distinction, in a moral

point of view, than this—that multitudes have abandoned—not for a time, but for life—a customary, innocent, moderate gratification, which did them personally no harm, on the single ground that others abused it to harm—that ‘this liberty of theirs was a stumbling-block to the weak.’ In this way an attempt has been made to begin the removal of a great mass of crime and wretchedness; the removal of which once seemed so hopeless, that the boldest enthusiast hardly dared to dream of it—which had so entrenched itself in the passions of men, in their habits, in their laws, in their interests, that it laughed defiance at all opposition. Against that evil, this principle of disinterestedness has been brought to bear; and the evil has begun to give way. An illustrious exemplification of the strength there is in Christian affection!”

## CHAPTER II.

INTEMPERANCE AS IT OPERATES UPON INDIVIDUAL  
CHARACTER.

INTEMPERANCE, as it operates upon individuals, consists in the degree or extent of a certain act, and not in the act itself. All persons allow that intemperance is a destructive and loathsome vice, and we are expressly told in the Scriptures that no drunkard can enter the kingdom of God; yet at the same time it is maintained by religious persons of every denomination, and to them we trust it is so, that drinking a small quantity of intoxicating liquid is perfectly right. We will suppose, then, that drinking a hundred thousand drops of this liquid is a sin of the deadliest character, since it excludes from the

blessedness of Heaven, and that drinking ten thousand drops is not only right in itself, but an act which may with propriety be associated with many of our observances of religious duty. I repeat, then, there must be between these two extremes a portion, a measure, nay even a drop at which propriety ceases, and impropriety begins; and however delicate may be the shades of difference towards this blending point, it is of the utmost importance to religious professors, and indeed to all who love their fellow men, that they should be able to say exactly where the line is, and to show it to others, before they venture to set an example to the world by venturing upon a course, which, if pursued too far, must inevitably end in ruin and death, and which can only be entered upon with perfect safety by ascertaining, what has never yet been discovered, exactly where the point of danger is.

What, for instance, should we think of the wisdom of that man, who should go blindfold

up an elevated plain, knowing that from its summit, a slippery and uncertain point, whose locality he had no means of determining, his course would tend downwards with accelerated speed, and that thousands and tens of thousands had perished by arriving at this point sooner than they had anticipated. What should we think if his object in choosing to venture on this path was not any actual necessity, but a mere momentary gratification, to feel the coolness of the turf beneath his feet, or the scent of sweet flowers by the way? We should scarcely point out such a man as an example of the influence of common sense upon his conduct, much less should we wish to follow in his steps; for though the point of danger might be distant to him, it might, from its irregular and uneven nature, be very near to us.

Yet we see every day, and sometimes oftener than the day, well-educated, enlightened, benevolent, and even religious persons, sit

down to the cheering glass of social entertainment, and while they take that, and perhaps another, and it may be a third, they talk of subjects refined, sublime, and elevated, and take sweet counsel together, and feel themselves spiritually as well as corporeally refreshed. They retire from the table to look out upon the moving world around. They behold the poor outcast from society, the victim of intemperance, and their delicacy is wounded by the sight, and they shrink with horror from his degradation and his shame. Yet that man's crisis of danger occurred perhaps only a very little earlier than theirs. He began the same course in precisely the same way. He had no more intention, and no more fear, of passing the summit of the hill than they have now; but owing to his bodily conformation, of which he was not aware until he made the experiment, owing to the peculiar nature of the draught of which he partook, to the manner or the place in which it was presented



to him, but more probably than all, to the apparent safety of such men as those who are now turning from the repulsive spectacle that his emaciated frame presents, he overstepped the line of safety before he was aware, and perished on the side of misery and guilt.

If a religious parent has a son addicted to the vice of gambling, he does not sit down with him to what is called an innocent game, that is, to play without money. He does not resort with him to the billiard table, even though betting should be scrupulously forbidden there. No, the very thought of the amusement, simply considered as such, becomes abhorrent to his feelings; and comparing the vast amount of mischief which has been done by this means, with the small amount of good, he banishes entirely from his house both the cards and the dice, that he may avoid all future injury to his son by putting from him even the appearance of evil.

It is upon the same principle that few

religious people in the present day will take into their hands a pack of cards, though all must be aware that there is nothing absolutely wrong in the painted paper, nor even in the game itself, beyond its loss of time. Yet from all appearance of evil in this particular form, they think themselves called upon to abstain, not only because of the crime and the misery to which gaming has led, but because the very nature of it is opposed to the spirit of the Gospel. From appearing to have any connexion whatever with what has been applied to purposes so base, they very properly shrink with horror; but from appearing to be connected with what has been the cause of another species of iniquity still wider in its extent, and more insidious in its nature, they feel no repulsion whatever.

But to return to the consideration of intemperance as it operates individually. It is a remarkable fact, that all persons begin this habit of indulgence innocently, or in other

words, without the least intention of becoming intemperate. Whatever their situation may be now, time was when they sat around the social bowl, as unconscious of evil as you are at this moment. By degrees, however, the potent draught became pleasant to them, so pleasant that they ventured nearer to the point of danger; and then, as has already been stated, the nearer they approached, the more careless they grew whether they overstepped the line or not. If, in such a situation, a human being could retain the full possession of his senses, he would know that the further he advanced in such a course the greater his danger would be; but the very opposite of this being the fact, and the perceptions of the intemperate man becoming more dim in the exact proportion as his danger increases, his case is one which claims, for this very reason, our especial sympathy and peculiar care. We should never forget, then, that the nearer the evil of drinking wine or any other intoxicat-

ing beverage approaches to sin, the less the mind perceives it, the less in short it is capable of understanding what sin is, so that by the time the point of danger is passed, there remains little ability to perceive that it is so, and then a little further and a little further still, and neither power nor inclination are left to return.

It may very properly be argued that the individual who has once been guilty of this breach of decorum and propriety, must know that the intoxicating draught is dangerous to him, whatever it may be to others. Unquestionably he does, and he feels after having once fallen, more certain that he will never fall again. He thinks he shall now know where to stop for the remainder of his life, and he begins again, very cautiously at first, congratulating himself, after a great many successful efforts, upon having so often stopped on the right side of the point of danger. As his confidence in-

creases however, he ventures further, for he has acquired a taste for the indulgence, and he likes the stimulus it gives to his animal frame, and the elasticity it imparts to his spirits. He likes too the feeling that he is not bound, or shackled; that he is able to associate on equal terms with other men, and can and dare do as he pleases. In this mood then he passes again the point of danger, and finds again, on returning to his senses, the folly and the sin he has committed. Still, however, he is not cast down. He has no more idea that he shall ever become an irreclaimably intemperate man, than you have that the drunkard's grave will be yours. He is quite sure that he can stop when he likes. Society of the best kind, and friends of the most respectable order, all tell him that he can, and he is but too willing to believe it. With this assurance they place before him the temptation. They invite him to partake, and if he should by any strange misap-

plication of their kindness go too far, they wash their hands of his guilt—it is *his*, and not theirs\*.

It is strange that sympathizing, benevolent, and well-disposed persons should be able to look upon individuals in this state—should see their weakness and their temptation, and yet never once think there is anything due from them towards a brother or a sister having just arrived at such a crisis of their fate. Indeed we are all perhaps too backward in offering advice or warning. We have much to say, and often say it harshly, and with little charitable feeling, when the case is decided; but the time to speak, and to speak urgently—to speak kindly too, as brothers or sisters in weakness, and fellow travellers on the same

\* The extent and variety of temptation to which individuals are thus exposed, is forcibly shewn in an important and valuable work by John Dunlop, Esq., on “the Drinking Usages” of our country, a work which ought to be in the hands of every patriot

path—the time to speak with prayer and supplication—to speak with the Bible in our hands, the eye of a righteous God above us, and the grave, that long home to which we are all hastening, beneath our feet—the time to speak thus, is while the victim still lingers, before offering himself up to that idol whose garlands of vine leaves are the badge of death.

But suppose the friends of the poor tempted one *do* warn him of his danger. Suppose they deal faithfully and affectionately with him, and point out clearly to him the rock on which he is in danger of being wrecked. Suppose he sees that danger too, and is brought to feel it as he ought, and promises and purposes with all sincerity of heart to avoid it for the rest of his life. What follows? He mixes in society with the friends who have warned him, and with others, who believe themselves to be, and who probably are, perfectly safe. Every board is supplied with

the tempting draught. The hospitality of the world requires that he, as well as others, should be pressed to partake. Why should he not? He has no more intention of partaking to excess than the most prudent person present. So far from this, he is determined, resolute, and certain that he will not exceed the limits of propriety. He therefore joins his friends on equal terms; and who shall say, if they are innocent, that he is not? It is true, his crisis of danger has approached nearer to him, while theirs remains as distant as before. It is true his power of self-mastery is considerably decreased. It is true his bodily inclination is opposed to his will. Yet so long as other men, and good men too, nay, even delicate, correct, and kind feeling women, are partaking of what is more agreeable, and quite as necessary to him as to them, who is there so ignorant of human nature, as to expect that such a man, unaided, should be able to stop exactly at the point where inno-



cence ceases, and where guilt begins? Again, I repeat, it is a mockery of common sense to look for such a result, and it is cruelty to require it.

No; such are the usages of society, that an individual in the state here described is almost sure to plunge deeper and deeper into the vice of intemperance, until in time he grows a little too bad for that society to countenance or endure. His early friends, those who set out with him in the same career, then begin to look coldly upon him. They wish he would not claim them as friends, at least in public. He next falls out of employment; he is not eligible for any place of trust; he begins to hang about, and his former acquaintance endeavour to walk past him without catching his eye. At last he becomes low,—his coat is threadbare; his hat is brown; he is a doomed man; his best friends forsake him; the good point him out as a warning to the bad; he is a terror to

women, and a laughing-stock to children,—and such are the tender mercies of the world in which we live!

It makes the heart ache to think how much has been said *against*—how little *for*—the victim of intemperance. We see the degradation, the shame, and the misery into which he has fallen; but who is the witness of his moments of penitence, his heart-struggles, his faint but still persevering resolves—faint, because he has no longer the moral power to save himself—persevering, because he is not yet altogether lost? If there be one spectacle on earth more affecting than all others, it is that of a human being mastered by temptation, yet conscious that the vice to which he yields is a cruel tyrant, from whose giant grasp he still struggles to be free. The writer of these pages has been appealed to again and again by the victim of intemperance, to say whether there was still hope—whether the door of mercy was closed—whe-

ther resistance to the enemy was still possible—whether the poor sufferer must inevitably be an outcast for ever? Not in one instance only, but in many, has this been her experience; not from the ignorant, and the utterly depraved, but from the highly gifted, the enlightened, and the refined. She answered the appeal in every instance by dwelling upon the efficacy of prayer; but at that time there was scarcely power to pray, and neither courage nor resolution to make the attempt. It is a subject of bitter regret at this moment, that she was then unacquainted with the principle upon which the total abstinence society subsists, that she did not say with promptness and cheerfulness in her self-denial, “Let us make an agreement together that we will taste no more this poisonous cup; it is pleasant to me as well as to you, but it is not necessary to health or cheerfulness; let us, therefore, make the experiment of abstaining from it altogether, and

what you suffer, I will suffer too." By this means it is probable that others—perhaps a whole household, might have been brought to join us; and how different the case would then have been from what it was, while the intoxicating draught was constantly brought out, while it was pressed upon all, and while every one partook of the refreshment it was supposed to afford!

I repeat, there is nothing more affecting than the contemplation of the victim of intemperance, while the conscience still remains alive to better things, and before the soul is utterly degraded. In this situation, it appears as if the whole world, parents, friends, associates, even the wise and the good, were in league against them. Nor is this all. Those bodily powers which to the thief and the murderer are still left free and unimpaired, to the intemperate man are no longer under his own command. His whole frame is debilitated, his nerves are shattered, and that excruciating

agony, which is the result of an excited imagination, operating in conjunction with a disordered brain, so takes possession of him, that the hours of the long day, and the longer night, are only to be endured by having recourse to draughts of greater potency, and more frequent repetition.

It frequently happens, that some severe or trying illness is sent to arrest this more dangerous disease in its destructive course. The patient then has time to think. He has time to pray too, if he uses his privileges aright; and there is every reason to believe that many who rise up from such a bed of suffering, do go forth into the world again disposed to be both wiser and better men. And what we ask again, is the result? In this debilitated state the physician recommends that what are called strengthening beverages should be taken in moderation. Kind friends are offering them on every hand; and when the patient goes into society again,

he goes as a sober man, and therefore he may take them with safety—as a man reclaimed from drunkenness, and therefore he may begin to drink again!

Need we farther trace out this mournful history, as repulsive as it is melancholy to contemplate. Such it cannot be denied has been the fate of thousands, of tens of thousands, and such is the experience of many at this time. We will, however, take a different view of the same subject, and suppose the case of an intemperate man, who makes the same effort to abstain at an earlier stage of his career, and in a different manner. He is one who feels himself convicted of sinful excess, and who feels also that nothing but total abstinence will save him from its woful consequences. He therefore binds himself singly, not only by a firm resolve, but also by a vow, to taste nothing that can possibly produce the effect of intoxication. Do any of his friends—those sincere well-wishers, who shudder at the

prospect of what he might bring upon himself—do any of these connect themselves with him in ~~this~~ resolve, and say that, in the path of safety and of self-denial, they will walk by his side? No. He makes his resolution unaided and alone; and that very act which is so necessary, as the only means of rescuing him from ultimate ruin, becomes in consequence of no one joining him in it, a badge of disgraceful distinction. In fact, he is a marked man; and when he goes into society, it is not to do as others do, but to confess by the rule he has laid down for himself, that he is weaker than they are, and that he has already been guilty of folly and of sin.

By abstaining only when there is urgent need to do so—only after excess has been committed—only when the individual who practises this needful caution is so weak as not to be trusted with the common usages of society, he is stamped at once with the stigma of intemperance, and his disgrace is more than

he can bear. It may be said that he *ought to bear it*, and that on him alone ought to rest the consequences of his past folly; but I would ask—Do men bear it? No; and no good has ever yet been effected by arguing upon, or endeavouring to enforce, what is contrary to the principles that are in human nature—principles that have regulated the actions of mankind from the beginning of the world, and that will regulate them to the end. These principles may be brought under a better influence, and made to act in unison with those of the Gospel of Christ; but they are not rendered extinct, and never can be in our present state of existence.

It is too much then to expect of man, in his natural and unregenerate state, that he should be *willing*—nay, that he should be *able*, to mix with society as it is now constituted on such terms; but for a woman it would be still worse. What! shall I declare openly, when others sip their pleasant and refreshing



beverage, that I dare not drink even moderately of the same draught!—that I have once gone too far, or am liable to do so again! The very case is revolting to human nature; and those who make this argument the burden of their low witticisms upon the advocates for total abstinence, know little of the purity of motive, the deep feeling, the generous impulse, and the disinterested benevolence upon which such persons act.

From the causes already described, more than from any other, those who have felt themselves to be in danger, and would gladly escape from their enemy, begin again in the same course, in compliance with the usages of society, and very naturally fall again into the same excess. The history of intemperance has been almost universally a history of successive alternations between sinning and repenting, between seasons of compunction accompanied with fresh resolves, and the same course of unintentional declension which has

led to the same end; with this difference, that the power to will, and the wish to act, have been weaker after every fall. It has been altogether like the case of a man with a naturally weak brain, who should walk on a pleasant and tempting path by the side of a precipice overhanging a dangerous flood. He falls in, as might be expected, but recovers himself, and tries the same path again. The experiment is repeated, and the same consequences follow; his companions and friends, who are stronger than himself, calling out to him to take more care for the future, not to go too near, but never recommending him not to try the path at all. At length he resolves to walk no more so near the edge of danger; and though the safer and more distant path is rough and uninteresting, and none walk in it but such as are avowedly in danger from their natural weakness, he tries it for a while. The flowery and pleasant path, however, is still the resort of his friends and associates,

some of whom invite him back, while many laugh at his inability to do as they are doing, and thus he is induced to make the experiment once more, when his natural powers being now impaired by the many accidents he has brought upon himself, he falls again, with less capacity than ever to struggle against the devouring flood. He now sinks lower and deeper amongst the foaming waves, while from those who still walk in safety on the edge of the precipice, from the very same individuals who lured him back, expressions of anger and contempt burst forth, with, perhaps, occasionally the faint wailings of compassion, or the fainter lamentations of affectionate regret. And do none cry out to him, "Try yet once more, and we will walk with you on that uninviting path?" Is there no band of brothers ready to come forward for his sake? Are there no sisters, linked hand in hand, to promise they will never leave his side, but cheer him on, so as, if possible,

to make it a pastime and a joy to walk with them even there? Is there no mother's voice to cry, "My son! my son! for thy sake will I never, as I have done, tread again that dangerous cliff—to me it might be safe, but since thy precious life is thus endangered, what are its flowers, its fragrance, or its grassy turf to me, in comparison with the safety of my child?" No; they all pass on—some with cruel mockery, others, it is true, with grief—but the victim is consigned to his fate, and the kindest only—let him alone.

On looking at the subject in this point of view, we see at once the beauty and the efficacy of the principle upon which temperance societies are established. If a society for the suppression of this vice were to consist exclusively of those who had been addicted to it, there would be disgrace and repulsion in the very name. Few, except persons altogether lost to shame, would have the courage to enrol their names in such a list; and the less

shame was left, the deeper would be the stigma upon a community of such individuals. The thing, indeed, would be morally impossible, as much so, as for a few dishonest men to associate themselves together, and to say, "We will form a society for the suppression of theft, by inviting all who have gone too far in that vice to join us."

But the Temperance Society is based on a more rational, a more firm, and a more lasting foundation. Men and women, too, who have never had to fear temptation for themselves, and these to the extent of hundreds of thousands, have linked themselves together by union of purpose for the general good, and have bound themselves not by a vow, but by a public pledge, which may at any time be withdrawn, that while members of that society they will not partake of what, though innocent to them, has been the cause of an incalculable amount of crime and misery to their fellow-beings.

Convinced of the important fact, that when the turning point in a man's life has come, when he wishes to cease to do evil, and to learn to do well, the kindest service his friends can do him is to endeavour to raise his moral standing, it must necessarily be the object of this Society to render it respectable, so that no man may be degraded amongst his fellow-men by joining it. That so noble and benevolent an object should be in any way defeated by the backwardness, nay, the opposition of any amongst the enlightened and benevolent classes of the community, is one of the wonders of our day. "Yet still they have come from the east and from the west, both men and women, who were without hope in the world, and many of whom are now sitting clothed and in their right mind, giving thanks in the house of God, and offering up their prayers with the multitude, whose privilege it is to call upon His name. And still, notwithstanding all that has been

thought, and felt, and done against this Society, thousands and thousands of helpless creatures have been reclaimed; from outcasts, have become blessings; from burdens, are helpers; from the shame, have come to be the joy of heart-broken friends. ‘This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.’ It is going on; and say what we may, what need not be denied of some doubtful procedures, of some unwise speeches, of some injudicious measures, of some even apparently rescued who have sunk back; still there remains ample room to believe the reform so far complete, that the next generation will know almost nothing of the curse which has burdened the past.”

## CHAPTER III.

## MODERATION.

IF between the two extremes of perfect innocence and actual sin, there is in the act of drinking intoxicating beverages a medium line at which the one ceases, and the other begins ; there must also be between that point and the extreme of innocence, another line at which safety ceases, and danger begins. We will, for the present, suppose this line to be fixed half way, though some of us are inclined to think it might be fixed upon the act altogether. Now as the line of sin seldom occurs at the same point with any two individuals, and even differs with the same individuals at different times, according to the capability of the body for sustaining such stimulus, with-



out exhibiting any outward sign of derangement, as it differs also according to the nature of the liquid partaken of; and as some maintain, according to the circumstances under which it is taken, and as danger always commences at a certain distance from actual sin, it must be extremely difficult, nay, impossible to say exactly, where the line of danger is, or I should rather say, where it is not.

Here, then, we see again the peculiar nature of a vice which consists only in an increased *degree* of what is no vice at all; and hence arises the necessity of adopting a mode of treatment, with regard to our fellow beings labouring under this particular temptation, which no other circumstances require.

Much has been said on the subject of intoxicating beverages not being necessary for our habitual use, and many able works, to which I would refer the reader, have been written to prove that they are not only unnecessary, but actually injurious. It is not

my business to enter upon this subject here, farther than simply to ask—Why are they taken? They are taken by most persons because it is customary to take them; by some, because they are considered essential to health; and by others, because they are agreeable in themselves, or in the feelings they produce. With all persons, however, they have a peculiar tendency to obtain power and mastery, because it is their nature to stimulate for a time, and consequently to produce exhaustion afterwards; according to that law in the human constitution which Dr. Farre describes, when he says, that “the circulation always falls off in a greater degree than it is forced.” Hence the languor and weariness after fever, and faintness and want of stimulus occurring periodically with those who are accustomed to resort to the excitement of wine for the refreshment either of mind or body.

There is also another law in our nature which renders excitement extremely delight-

ful. Indeed one would be almost tempted to think that, to a large proportion of the individuals who mix in general society, it was the one thing needful to their existence. There can be little doubt but that this law has been originally laid down in wisdom, and in mercy, to urge us on to action, and to prevent our wearying in the pursuit of what is good ; but how has it been perverted from its original design ! We seek the world over for stimulus to create the sensation we delight in, instead of being satisfied to enjoy, along with every act of duty, that natural excitement which it has been so wisely intended to produce.

But the stimulus to which we most habitually, and, according to the generally received opinion, most lawfully resort, is wine. We feel a little faint about the middle of the day, and we take it then. We are thus strengthened, and enabled to go out and make our calls, or to attend to our duties in any other way. We can even visit the poor, and we

really do feel more vigour, more ability, and more courage to admonish them of their extravagance and excess, particularly in the way of *intemperance*, immediately after what we call the necessary stimulus has been taken. We come back, however, exceedingly tired, and did not the dinner table present us with a fresh supply, we believe we should scarcely be able to get through the day. Our fathers and brothers, however, are surely not subject to this faintness about the hour of noon? No;—but they come home reasonably, and absolutely tired, and they, too, must have their strength restored by the same invigorating draughts.

If such then be the condition, and such the habits, of persons in perfect health, and easy circumstances, what must be the measure of relief required from the same medicine by the millions who are ill at ease, who are suffering either from mental anxiety, or bodily pain, or perhaps from both? The

human frame, even *with* the advantage of this wholesome and *necessary* stimulus, is subject to a variety of diseases, and uncomfortable sensations, which we are not only anxious to remove ourselves, but which our kind friends are anxious to remove for us; and artificial stimulus is thus resorted to, not to cure these diseases, for that it cannot do—not to remedy these uncomfortable sensations, for they come again—but to make us *feel them less*.

I would here beg to claim the particular attention of the reader—for here the subject assumes a most serious and important aspect—and I would ask the question candidly and kindly, are those diseases of the body, and those uncomfortable sensations to which I have alluded, really remedied, or lastingly alleviated, by intoxicating liquids; or is the body only brought into such a condition as to be made more easy under their infliction, and more careless about them altogether? are they not in reality superseded by other sensations of a

pleasurable nature, so as to be no longer felt or regarded? We know that a very slight degree of pain may be so soothed by gentle friction, and by other means of a similar nature, as for a time scarcely to be felt, and certainly not cared for; while a greater degree of suffering is often alleviated by inflicting other kinds of pain upon different parts of the body. If, then, the whole of our bodily sensations could be just so far, and so agreeably, put in operation, that we should be wholly occupied with a lively and pervading sense of indefinite pleasure, it is but reasonable to suppose that we should be rendered by this means not only insensible to, but wholly unconscious of, a moderate degree of pain in any particular part. This, then, is precisely the manner in which intoxicating stimulants operate upon the bodily frame, except only in those very few and partial cases where they are really calculated to do good, in all of which, other and safer

medicines might be substituted in their stead.

In reasoning on this important subject, however, I must confess I am one of those who do not consider the question of health as so deeply involved, as that of moral responsibility. But the case has now been tried for a sufficient length of time, even in this country, to prove that without any kind of intoxicating beverage, a state of health as good—nay, even better, may be enjoyed. Happily for our cause, there are hundreds and thousands of witnesses now ready to attest the fact, that they never were so well as since they totally abstained; while on the other hand, those who declare themselves incapable of doing without such stimulus, almost invariably show by an exhibition of some, or many maladies, that they do very badly with it.

If, then, it is the frequent and almost invariable tendency of those who take a little

wine to make them comfortable, to take a little and a little more, as the body under its various ailments may seem to require, what must be done when the mind with its long catalogue of deeper maladies becomes disturbed? What must be done as it becomes a prey to all those gnawing anxieties which mix themselves in with the under-current of daily life, especially in the present state of society? Why, the sudden intelligence of an unexpected loss, will often induce a man to gratify himself with this kind of imaginary strength; while the necessity of dismissing a servant not less frequently sends the mistress of a house for refreshment to her sideboard. And yet we are told there is no danger—no danger at all in all this. I repeat, that, not knowing exactly where the line of danger is, it is and must be a perilous experiment to all; and nothing can tend more forcibly to substantiate this truth, than the fact that all men, and all women too, who are now the degraded



victims of intemperance, began and went on precisely in this manner, not one amongst them intending, or believing it possible at first, that they should ever exceed the limits prescribed by safety or decorum.

But what is it which makes this wine, or this liquid, which soothes away our pain, so desirable? Is it not a pleasurable sensation throughout the whole animal frame—a little warmth—a little comfort—a little energy—a little confidence—a little satisfaction in ourselves—a *very little* of all these, so little that we could not define their combined operation, except by saying, we *feel better than before*? And yet this very feeling, innocent as it may appear in itself, is in reality a *degree* of intoxication. The same sensation thrilling through the frame, is what, by advancing a few steps farther in the same course, would become muscular distortion—the same pleasant glow would become restless fever—the same sense of comfort would be ecstatic folly—

the same energy would be madness—the same confidence would be incapability of shame; and the same self-satisfaction would be the same glorious exultation of the intemperate in his own disgrace.

It is painful—it is repulsive to enter into these minute descriptions, on a subject which it would be a privilege to be enabled to forget, and to forget for ever. But it is due to that subject, that it should be fairly treated, and it is due to the honoured friends of the temperance cause, that their views and their principles should be clearly understood. Let us regard it then in another light.

We have, most probably, all witnessed the effect of nitrous oxide upon the human system; or if any have not, I may speak of it as that kind of gas which, when inhaled, produces the effect of immoderate laughter, with extraordinary excitement of the animal frame and spirits, so that the person thus stimulated exhibits the most ridiculous behaviour. Now

suppose the same individual, who had made this exhibition of himself in the evening, was to come the next day to transact any serious business with you, having inhaled only a very *small portion of the same gas*, only just enough to make him feel more comfortable than he did before, would you not consider him less sane, less rational, and less safe in every way, than if he had not breathed the gas at all? Unquestionably you would; and in exactly the same proportion as it had made him feel more comfortable, you would be convinced it had disqualified him for the occupations, the reflections, and the duties of a man. I do not say that he would be *wholly* disqualified. Far from it. He himself would be more lively, more ready, and more confident of himself in every way. But would he in reality be more competent, and more deserving of the confidence of others? Most assuredly not; and you see in an instant in this case, that a perfectly wise man would not

trust himself to breathe, though but in a small quantity, what was capable of confusing, and even maddening, his brain.

Again, let us ask of the Christian philanthropist whether, if he had committed to him the sovereignty of some newly discovered island, for the government of whose inhabitants he had to make laws, which should influence the character and welfare of those people through successive ages ; if also they had hitherto lived in total ignorance of the use and properties of intoxicating liquids—Let us ask whether, thus situated, and taking into account all the good, and all the evil, already done in other countries by the introduction of such knowledge, he would deem it benevolent or wise to introduce such indulgences amongst the people over whom he ruled, and for whose virtue and happiness here, and hereafter, he was necessarily so deeply responsible?

Surely there are few who would not an-

swer to this question, "No. Let my people go on in their ignorance of this incentive to passion and to vice. It is enough for me to govern them aright, without inventing a new enemy to their welfare in this artificial and extraordinary means of excitement; and lest my own example in using such means myself, even in moderation, should induce them to use it to excess, I will cheerfully endure the inconvenience of removing what is to me an innocent enjoyment, esteeming it a privilege to do so for the sake of those who are weaker and more ignorant than myself."

If, then, such would be the language, and such the decision of every sincere well-wisher to the human race, should not the same feeling operate at least as powerfully in a country already suffering from this fatal knowledge, in all its domestic, social, and political interests? And though happily for us, it is not left to any single individual to make laws for our government in this or any other re-

spect, it is surely not too much to ask,—why the same principle which would induce the absolute sovereign to give up his own use of so dangerous an indulgence for the sake of his people, does not operate with the enlightened Christian, so as to call forth the exercise of his influence to the utmost extent in the same benevolent cause?

Once more, let us try the subject in a different point of view. There is much talk in the present day of the wonderful effects of mesmerism; and, without entering into the merits or demerits of the question at large, we will suppose, for an instant, that all the cases we read of are substantiated by sufficient proof. If, however, while we believed this mysterious agency to have been the means of removing or suspending certain maladies, we knew beyond a doubt that it had been the cause of death to many, of madness to more, and of misery to all upon whom it operated to excess; if no one either could tell exactly

how far its operation was safe; but all could perceive that it had a peculiar tendency to lead people on in their exercise of it, from one step to another, until reason was finally overthrown, and folly and vice unscrupulously committed under its influence; should any of us in our senses, seeing and knowing all this, be willing to introduce the practice of mesmerism into our families, even when exercised to a very trifling extent? Should we desire to make it a part of our social enjoyments; or should we not rather, considering the immense amount of evil it was capable of doing, in proportion to its good—*seeing too that the good was to the body, and the evil to the mind*—should we not rather dismiss the system altogether from our own practice, as unworthy the countenance of prudent and responsible beings?

Yes, already we are startled at the practice of this strange art in our hospitals; and although guiltless of having produced any

deterioration in the morals or the happiness of the people, already we look with suspicion and fear upon that strong mysterious sleep to which its subjects are consigned, though no instance has yet occurred of its iron chains being rivetted for more than a certain length of time, depending entirely upon the will of the operator. Such, indeed, is the character of mesmerism, with all its acknowledged harmlessness, that I much question whether the practice of it as a social amusement, even to a moderate extent, would be deemed a justifiable indulgence amongst rational and serious people ; yet thousands upon thousands of such individuals allow themselves to partake every day, and in their most pleasurable and unguarded moments, of an indulgence far more difficult to limit in degree, and immeasurably beyond all that is yet known of mesmerism in the danger of its results.

It is true, that on the plea of health, of comfort, but more especially of habit, wine



has already obtained dominion over our land, while mesmerism is but a stranger to our shores, and justly a suspected one; but if on the ground of its being likely to do more harm than good, and particularly *moral* harm opposed to *physical* good, we discountenance the one; how, on the same ground, can we find a pretence for cherishing the other? The very fact that intoxicating drinks *can* only in their highest use do good to the body, while they have proved themselves most fatally deleterious to the mind, ought of itself to be sufficient to make the Christian philanthropist pause, in order to weigh the subject carefully, impartially, and with reference to the Divine law, which teaches us that the soul of man is above all calculation precious in the sight of his Maker.

One of the most potent arguments in favour of the use of wine, as it has operated practically upon society, and especially upon young men of hopeful talent, is, that some

of our most popular writers, as well as our most distinguished men of genius, have been addicted to the use of it, in a measure far exceeding the bounds of moderation. It is a lamentable fact, that such has been the case; but whatever may be the fascination which popular applause has thrown around the public career of such men, we need only look into their private lives, to see how far they were in reality, from being objects worthy either of envy, or of imitation.

No; these are not the men whom after-ages regard as the benefactors of their race; and even if they were, what dark and gloomy chronicle shall tell of the numbers now without a name, of equal or superior genius to them, but with less ability to exercise that genius, not in consequence, but in spite of, such habits of excess? And, after all, it is the *number* of men of talent which makes a nation great, and wise. It is not here and there a genius flashing in a century of igno-

rance. I repeat, such men are not the pillars we depend upon for the intellectual and moral dignity of our nation. Startling, brilliant, and eccentric, their course resembles only that of the fiery comet—a blaze in the heavens—a wonder to the eyes of men. Yet how different from the milder planet, or the fixed and constant star, to which the traveller turns with trusting heart, and by which the mariner steers his trackless course along the mighty deep!

It is to men of deep thought, of patient labour, and, above all, of steady mind, that society owes the greatest blessing, which it is the privilege of enlightened intellect to impart; and, in order to preserve that steadiness of purpose, that fixedness of resolve, and that supremacy of the mind over the body, which are essential to the efficient working out of any great and lasting good, it has always been found necessary to lead a temperate and abstemious life, both as re-

guards bodily indulgence, and animal excitement.

And if this is necessary for superior minds, in order to their beneficial exercise for the good of the community at large, it is at least equally so for common minds, as a means of preserving them from those follies and inconsistencies which are sufficiently called forth by the ordinary course of social and worldly affairs. It would seem, however, that the generality of mankind are so fortified against the evils, perplexities, and dangers of this life, by the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove, that they can afford to risk the consequences of perpetually adding to the stimulus which incites to sensation and to action, just so much as they take away from the calm judgment that is so often needed to control our feelings, and to teach us how to act aright. Hence an endless catalogue of evils, arising from the miscalculations, oversights in business, hasty con-

clusions, intemperate expressions, weakness under temptation, and general subserviency of principle to inclination, amongst men; while amongst women the sad consequences of the tell-tale tongue, the sudden impulse, and the wilful act, have been scarcely less calamitous. To women especially the excitement of society alone is often enough, and too much for the equanimity of minds over which there has been exercised no habitual control; and, after the accustomed means of increasing that excitement have been freely, though not according to the opinion of the world *too* freely used, how many through the long, dull, weary, morning hours have to look back with shame to the confused and busy scenes of the previous evening, amongst which the dim, but certain witness of their own folly stands forth conspicuous, as if to warn them against ever venturing upon the same unguarded course again!

But it would require volumes to detail

even the most familiar instances arising from this practice as it prevails in society, impregnating with its poison the secret springs of feeling, and stimulating to all those little acts, thoughts, looks, and words which constitute the *beginnings* of evil, and which may justly be compared to sparks applied to a long train of mischief, including the practice of every kind of selfishness, duplicity, and too often bad faith. Would that peculiar look, for instance, have been given? Would that word have passed the fair speaker's lips? Would that strange eccentric act have been committed had no artificial stimulus been used? Oh, woman! reckless woman! how often has thy character received a bias, and thy whole life a shade, from the consequences of some rash purpose conceived without a thought of harm, and acted upon from the sudden impulse of a moment! How often has the friend of thy bosom been wounded, the love of years destroyed, and shipwreck

made of happiness and peace, from the mere indulgence of a transient inclination too impetuous for reason to control! And yet under circumstances of peculiar temptation from the excitement incident to society, woman is the first to place herself in peril by voluntarily adding to the stimulus, of which she has already more than her natural prudence can restrain.

Thus, then, we venture to trifle with the immortal mind; thus we presumptuously dare to ruffle the calm of that bright mirror which ought to reflect the image of Divinity!

But there is another view of this subject which has proved a very conclusive one with me, and no doubt with many others. After a person has partaken even sparingly of intoxicating stimulus, I cannot believe that he is in so suitable a condition to pray as he was before; and yet the habitual frame of the Christian's mind should be such, as that he may be ready at any hour, or at any mo-

ment, to offer up those secret appeals for Divine sanction, guidance, and support, without which we cannot expect to be kept in safety, in our going out, or coming in—when we begin the day, or when we lie down to sleep at night. Besides which, there are all those momentary little occurrences of daily life by which we are surprised into evil more frequently than by obvious temptations—those sudden questions which we sometimes cannot answer without a secret prayer that our lips may be kept from speaking guile—those trials of temper, and those tests of principle, against which we have need to fortify ourselves by watchfulness as well as by prayer. And how is it possible we should be so constantly and entirely on our guard as we might otherwise be, whilst under the influence even of the slightest degree of this kind of stimulus?

There are but few persons, I should suppose, who would think of preparing them-



selves for the duties of public worship by the use of wine; yet, if there be one situation in which we are less in danger from temptation than all others, it may reasonably be said to be when Christian friends go up to the house of God in company. He to whom the secrets of all hearts are laid bare—He knows that even here the busy mind has enough to do to call in its wandering thoughts, and keep them fixed upon the words of the preacher, or upon the supreme object of adoration. But if here, when surrounded with all that can remind us by association and habit of the solemn purpose for which a serious, and apparently united, community of immortal beings are met—if even here, while the truths of the Gospel are laid before us, while prayer and praise are ascending from the multitude around, we are unable to control the faculties of the mind so as to bring them under subjection to the solemn requirements of the great duty of public worship, what must be

the difficulty of exercising a suitable control over our thoughts and actions when not reminded of these things, when surrounded by worldly or thoughtless companions, when associated with the world in its stirring, importunate, and necessary avocations, or when mixing, so far as Christians can mix, with its pleasures and amusements.

In addition to the duties of public worship, there are those of private devotion—there is the reading of the sacred Scriptures, the prayer of the family, and the prayer of the closet; and how often must these be attended to at a time when the bodily frame is exhausted, and when, consequently, temptation is strong upon those who are addicted to such habits, to supply with momentary stimulus the enfeebled energies of the mind. What then, I ask, and I would ask it kindly and solemnly, is the nature of those prayers which are offered up under such stimulus? are they not often mere words, compiled from a set of

familiar phrases, with which the heart has no living or present sympathy? And though to the mere formal hearer they may exhibit no perceptible deficiency, He to whom they are addressed knows well that they have little to do with that worship, which he has expressly declared to be acceptable only when offered *in spirit and in truth*.

There are social and convivial meetings often held at the houses of religious people; and far be it from me to wish that it should be otherwise. Far be it from me to attempt to throw a shadow over what I am happy in believing is the brightest aspect of human life — the path along which the Christian walks humbly with his God. Individually I have perhaps rather too strong a tendency to think that religious people should, above all others, understand the science of rational enjoyment, and exhibit before the world the important truth, that even earthly happiness may be innocently, cordially, and thoroughly enjoyed.

In this very enjoyment, however, there is excitement enough for the safety of what ought to be the habitual frame of the Christian's mind, in the meeting of friends, in the freedom of social converse, and, above all, in the exhilarating and delightful sensation of uniting, heart to heart, and hand to hand, with those whom we love and admire, in one great, one common, and one glorious cause.

There is sufficient excitement, too, occasioned by the general advocacy of this cause, by the public meetings, and the thrilling eloquence so often heard on these occasions—there is excitement enough in all this, and sometimes too much, for the even balance of the Christian's feelings and temper, without the addition of artificial stimulus applied to the animal frame, which at best produces only a transient accession of energy, to be followed by a lassitude and exhaustion unknown to those who never use such stimulus.

I am, however, one of those who believe,

that, in the sight of God, our habitual and secret feelings are of as much importance as the energy we carry with us into public effort. I believe that the ranks of the blessed in an eternity of happiness will be filled up, not by those who have merely moved others in a righteous cause, but by the meek and humble followers of a crucified Saviour, whose consistent walk on earth has been in conformity with his precepts, and under the guidance of his Spirit. It is not what we *do*, but what we *are*, that we must be judged by in the great day of account; and it is therefore the Christian's duty to examine every motive, to watch every act, and to control every impulse, so that his private as well as his public life shall be acceptable in the Divine sight.

Were this not the case—were it lawful or expedient for the Christian to throw the whole energy of his mind and body into one great public effort, and to leave nothing for his private hours, for his family, or for the

religion of his closet, but nervous irritation, weariness, or senseless sleep, I should be willing to allow that the use of stimulants might be favourable to such a course of action. Indeed, I am but too well assured, that many extraordinary instances of oratorical power, many startling flashes of brilliant genius, and many single efforts, almost supernatural in their force and their effect, have been produced under the influence of this kind of excitement. But who has followed the individuals, from whom such extraordinary action emanated, home to their families or their closets? or, having so followed them, who would pronounce upon their condition there as being that of happy men—of men whose daily and hourly conduct constituted one continued homage to the purity, the holiness, and the benignity of their Creator?

No. I appeal to common sense, to experience, and to observation of the world in general, whether the individuals thus occa-

sionally wrought upon by artificial stimulus for a particular and transitory purpose, are not, of all mankind, the least enviable in their private experience and habits, the most irritable in their feelings, and the most weary of life and its accumulated ills?

Just in proportion then as the religious professor allows himself to approach to this extreme, his private life and the secret history of his religious character become stamped with an impress fearfully at variance with the calm purity, the clear intelligence, and the high spiritual enjoyment which constitute the Christian's happiest foretaste of the blessedness of the heavenly kingdom.

Such observations, however, belong only to the theory of this dangerous practice. Facts, awful facts, attested by ministers of every religious denomination, are not wanting to assure us, that of the causes of religious declension now prevailing in the world, the drinking usages of our enlightened country

have been the most fatal in their consequences.

The author of "Anti-Bacchus," himself, a minister of religion, and one who has spent no small amount of time and talent in the investigation of this subject, has the following passage in his valuable work, and I know not how I can more appropriately close this chapter.

"Let us look round our congregations, and enumerate those opening buds of promise which have been withered and blasted, and let us inquire also into the influence which destroyed our hopes, and the peace and respectability of the offenders, and we shall find that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, these drinks have been the remote or proximate cause. I have seen the youthful professor, whose zeal, talent, respectability, and consistent piety, have promised much to the church and the world, led on from moderate to immoderate draughts, in



the end become a tippler, dismissed from the church, disowned by his friends, himself a nuisance to society, and his family in rags. I have seen the generous tradesman, by whose zeal for the Gospel, and at whose expense too the ministers of religion have been introduced into a destitute village, and eventually a house erected for God, and a flourishing church formed, himself excluding himself by his love of strong drink. Would to God these instances were solitary! But, alas! they are not. Almost every church and every minister have to weep over spiritual hopes blasted, and Christianity outraged by these drinks.

“We must here also observe, that if but one member of the church had backslidden, if but one angel of the church had fallen, or but one hopeful convert had been lost, through the use of alcohol drinks, the thought that only *one* had been betrayed and corrupted, ought to make us resolve to abstain. The

consideration that what had destroyed *one* might injure *many*, would, were not our hearts more than usually hard, prompt us to vow never to touch or taste again. But we have not to tell of *one*, but of *many*, that have been ruined. The hopeful ministers of the sanctuary who have fallen are not a few. And as to members and young people of the highest promise, who have been lost to the church through this practice, these might be counted by thousands."

Such are the words of one of the most zealous advocates of total abstinence; and I give them in preference to my own, because I should be sorry to presume upon any right I may have, as a private individual, to interfere with the habits, or question the judgment of those, who, thinking differently from myself in this respect, faithfully fill the high station of ministers of the Gospel. Of them, and of religious professors in general, all I ask is, that they would give the subject their

cordial and serious consideration, while they ask how many the force of their example might possibly preserve from the fatal consequences of this insidious habit. The question has now become one which can no longer be put from us as unworthy of examination, without a dereliction of duty. With the result of such examination I have nothing to do. *Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind*, remembering that *full persuasion* can only be the result of serious, persevering, and *impartial* inquiry.

## CHAPTER IV.

## TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

If the brilliant career of some of our most distinguished men has been suddenly arrested by intemperance, and if the private career of others has from the same cause been over-spread by a premature and total darkness, if, too, we have to lament the obvious and lamentable fall of pillars in the church of God, what must be the amount of genius dimmed, and religious hope extinguished, of which the world has taken no account, and which can be computed only by Him, without whose knowledge not so much as a sparrow falls to the ground!

I speak still of a *moderate* use of these stimulants which at once excite and soothe.

I speak of cases in which just so much is taken as to lull the mind into a sort of agreeable repose, or into the still more agreeable belief that it is actually employed, when in reality it is not, or at least not to any practical or useful purpose. For this, after all, is the most delusive tendency both of alcohol and laudanum, to create, when taken in moderation, a pleasing sensation of activity in the nervous system, while thought flows on in so mixed and uncertain a current, as seldom to prompt to any definite purpose, or continued action—in that dreamy, after-dinner state so little removed from mere animal existence. And hence, as this state becomes habitual, that weakness of resolution, indolence, and inability for prompt and energetic effort, which mark the characters of those who indulge in the frequent use of intoxicating drinks. With such persons, even while they seldom or never exceed the bounds of what the world calls moderation, what a

fearful proportion of their lives is spent in this kind of half-existence—in merely dreaming that they live; and if the claims of society, business, or public usefulness demand from them at certain seasons a degree of extra exertion, how abundantly do they afterwards indemnify themselves for their loss of ease, by applying fresh stimulants to relieve the weariness under which they necessarily suffer!

By what means persons of this description are secured against ultimate excess and ruin, it would be difficult to say. With them, all is left to chance, to bodily constitution, and to habit. The consequence is, that from amongst their ranks, intemperance selects its most sure and most willing victims. It is worthy of observation, too, that at no stage of life are mankind exempt from the liability of falling under this temptation. I remember, when a girl, hearing a gentleman—and he certainly *was* a gentleman of the old English

school, a man of enlightened mind, too, on almost every subject except the most important one—I remember hearing this man boast that he had been the means of making his neighbour a drunkard. He used to tell, also, at the same time, how this neighbour, in early youth an honest, upright man, retained the strictest morals, and the most complete self-mastery, especially in this respect, until the age of thirty; when, as a married man, and the father of a family, he fell into the snare of the tempter, never to escape until the hand of death removed him from the commission of sin, to the endurance of its consequences.

It needs, however, considerable experience of human life, and a somewhat lengthened observation of the changes which take place in individuals and families, to be able to trace out the reality of the curse of intemperance in its gradual operation upon the hearts and the lives of our fellow-creatures. In short,

we must be able to look back to what the drunkard was, to see from whence he has fallen; and by that far-off eminence to compute the extent of his loss, and the depth of his degradation. The young, and those who have little knowledge of the world, are not able to do this; yet such is the force of habit, that we generally find the young more willing than the old, or even the middle-aged, to come forward and join the ranks of those who entirely avoid these drinks. It is not to them, however, that we can look for those strong convictions of the reality of the evil, which naturally impress the minds of persons who have been in a manner *compelled* to trace out the private history of the victim of intemperance. They can know nothing of the youth of early promise which once dawned upon yon poor outcast from society,—how, fondly cherished by a doting mother, he grew up the pride of all the household,—how the light of superior intellect adorned



his mind, while beauty beamed upon his brow, and wit and humour woke the ready laugh which ever welcomed him amongst his friends. It is for those only who have been intimately associated with this child of hope, really to feel the heart-sickening spectacle of his gradual fall,—his beauty faded, his intellect impaired, his wit become profane or low, or quenched in childish tears,—not one of all his admiring and convivial friends who would now acknowledge him. Not one, did we say? No, not one amongst his companions of the midnight revel, or the jovial board. But though all have forsaken or disowned him, in the lone chamber of his widowed mother, tears are falling still, while prayers are breathing forth the very soul of that fond woman whose love is strong as death; and, strange to say, she who has suffered most, and been most humbled by his degradation, is the last, the very last, to cast him off. She who admired him most in his

young beauty, who laid her hand so proudly on the golden curls which graced his noble brow, she looks upon him with a mother's fondness still, and would fold him to her bosom—Oh, how fondly!—yet. She, however, is no philosopher, knows little of the wants of human nature, or the discipline required to bring it back from disease and wretchedness to a healthy and honourable state; and thus when the prodigal comes back, as he does occasionally, to share the scanty pittance refused to him elsewhere, she places thoughtlessly before him the tempting draught, in her blind and foolish ignorance deeming it necessary, when taken in moderation, for the restoration of his wasted strength. Thus it is easy to perceive that such a mother can exercise no beneficial influence over her infatuated son; and if not the mother, with all her tenderness and untiring affection, who, then, is to be looked to for assistance in the hour of need?

It is in fact this blind and persevering determination to advocate the use of a *moderate* quantity, which produces nearly all the excess now existing in the world. It has been justly said, that no one was ever yet allured into the ranks of intemperance by its actual victims, after they had obviously become such. Far more calculated to warn and to deter, is the wretched and disgusting spectacle the drunkard exhibits to the world; and if the choice were now submitted to the young beginner, whether he would lose a right hand or a right eye, or consign himself to such a fate, most assuredly he would prefer the former, so opposed is the last stage of intemperance to everything we esteem as desirable of imitation: it is besides so generally considered by the world as being easy to retreat, after having once gone too far, that the young beginner never discovers how this situation can possibly be his, until it has actually become so.

We are all too much in the habit of looking upon the sins of intemperance as belonging only to its extreme stage of degradation; but did men sin no more under its influence than they do in this helpless and abject state, the evil itself would be lessened by an amazing amount. It is not excess to which the ruffian yields himself when he contemplates a deed of horror. That would disqualify his arm for the fatal blow. No, it is what is considered moderation which stimulates to the practice, not only of open and daring crime, but of all those acts of deception employed to betray the innocent and the unwary to their own destruction. It is the moderate draught which fires the passions of the revengeful and the malignant—in short, which gives the moving impulse to that vast machinery of guilt, which scatters misery and ruin amongst our fellow-creatures, which desolates their homes, shuts them out from Christian fellowship, and lowers our whole

country in the scale of moral worth. It is this moderate portion which invariably makes bad men worse—need we inquire, whether it ever yet was known to make good men better?

Great and glorious, then, as the results of the temperance movement have been in reclaiming those who appeared to be irretrievably lost to their friends and to society, its most beneficial operation, and that to which we look for the greatest good, is its power to arrest the downward progress of the moderate, before they shall have lost caste amongst their fellow-men. In order to do this, it is necessary that there should be some powerful and immediate check against so much as tasting the dangerous draught. This check has been tried by a mere promise to a friend for a stated period, and has often proved sufficient for the time, though the opposite cases in which it has failed, may be reckoned as a thousand to one; for, until the temperance

principle was made known, it never seemed to occur to such friends, that their part, and a very important one in the work of reformation, was to join with the tempted in totally abstaining.

And here let us observe, that it is one of the peculiar and striking features of intemperance as a vice, that its victims often loathe the very monster on whose polluted altars they are offering up their lives; nay, they even loathe themselves, and hate and despise the tyranny whose badge of cruel servitude they wear. In this state the struggles of the wretched victim to escape, are sometimes most painful and heart-rending to the confidential friend to whom they are disclosed. Sometimes prayer is resorted to, sometimes penance. Every device which a wounded spirit can suggest, except the only sure and effectual one, is by turns adopted and renounced; and still, though torn and lacerated by a thousand agonies, which the untempted can

never know, until within the last few years, these miserable and isolated beings cried to their fellow-creatures for help in vain. Sometimes, by the mercy of God, they have been enabled to maintain through life a station of respectability at the cost of a lingering struggle almost too painful for nature to endure; and sometimes at an advanced age, as bodily infirmities have increased, the enemy at last has conquered them.

How little have such individuals known that the very moderation which they continued to practise as lessening their difficulty, was in reality the cause of all their suffering! One prompt and decided effort to put away the perilous thing *entirely*, and *for ever*, would have placed them immediately on the side of safety, where temptation would soon have ceased altogether to assail their peace. But, instead of such an effort, their whole lives have been a continued conflict, often carried on in weakness and distress; one per-

petual sacrifice made at the expense of cheerfulness and social feeling; one act of painful self-denial having every hour to be renewed, and consequently never bringing its appropriate reward of gratitude and joy. In justice to ourselves, then, it is but right that we should adopt a mode of acting prudently, at once more safe, and infinitely less irksome and destructive to our happiness. As an act of duty to God, it is highly essential that we should make a more entire and less grudging sacrifice; while as an act of benevolence to our fellow-creatures, it is not less important that we should show them how practicable it is, cheerfully, promptly, and wholly to abstain.

While speaking of the extreme pain and difficulty of partial abstinence, when opposed to inclination, a circumstance has been brought to my recollection which affected me powerfully at the time, though it failed to convince me of the unkindness and inconsistency of my



own conduct. It was on the occasion of some visitors arriving at my father's house, when all the family except myself were absent. The customary duties of hospitality consequently devolved upon me, and with other refreshments, as a matter of course, I ordered wine to be placed upon the table. Seated in the same room at that time was one of the greatest sufferers from habitual and constitutional intemperance, it has ever been my lot to know—a sufferer both from the force of the temptation, and the remorse, and loss of character it occasioned him to endure. He was a clergyman, and an eminent scholar, perfectly sane and sober then, having bound himself by a promise that he would scrupulously abstain for a stated period. When my guests had refreshed themselves, we walked out into the garden, leaving this individual, as I distinctly recollect, seated opposite the table, with his eyes fixed intently upon the wine; and he told me

afterwards, that no language could describe the agony he endured while I was pouring out the tempting draught, and urging it upon my friends; but more especially when he was in the room alone with it before him. It is scarcely necessary to add, that he indemnified himself only too deeply for this privation, so soon as the term of his promised abstinence expired.

The advocates of total abstinence are accused of going too far in discouraging the use of intoxicating beverages altogether. But, surely, such charges can only come from persons ignorant of human nature, of the power of association, and of the force of the temptations to which that nature is exposed. I would appeal to individual experience, whether partaking even in a very limited degree of a stimulating beverage does not create an inclination for more? whether taking a glass of wine one day does not make more necessary the next? and whether, when such stim-

ulants are resorted to, as a means of restoring strength, they do not require to be continued, and even increased, for the same purpose. If, however, the strength was really increased by such means, the use of it would soon cease to be necessary; no one wishing to be strong beyond a certain point; instead of which, the demand is still kept up, for that very end which it thus appears plainly can never be answered by such means.

Another case in point at this moment occurs to me, which I am induced to record, because I know it to be a fact. A lady of my acquaintance, and I have it upon her authority, whose mind was seriously impressed with the importance of personal abstinence, struggled on for some time in the manner I have described, without being able to make a sufficient effort for the effectual carrying out of her purpose. Thus, she was often an abstainer for a week or a month, hoping she might keep up the habit, without

really resolving to do so. While she remained in this state, it happened that on those days when she partook, with her friends, even of the smallest quantity, such was the force of habit, and such the power of association, that she invariably went to her store-room immediately after they were gone, and poured out for herself a glass of the wine she had just tasted; nor was she exempt from the same weakness for two or three days afterwards.

Dr. Johnson is often quoted as high authority in favour of the safety of abstinence, when compared with moderation. When asked by Hannah Moore, at a dinner party one day, to take a little wine, he replied, "I cannot take a *little*, and therefore *I never take any*. Abstinence is as easy to me as temperance would be difficult."

But the temperance society, in its far-stretching benevolence, embraces principles of higher obligation than this. "Abstain,"

said an assembly of ministers of the Gospel to a brother whom intoxicating drink was destroying. "Oh," said he, "how could I endure to be singular, to be ridiculed and scorned in whatever company I might appear!" "Abstain," said a worthy brother; "*I will abstain too, and keep you in countenance.*" This was a Temperance Society before the name was known\*."

I have spoken of the situation of those who abstain because they have already fallen under temptation, and I have endeavoured to shew how their marked, degraded, and solitary lot is more than a sensitive and delicate mind can endure. But I have omitted to observe in its proper place, that there exists an additional reason why their unaided efforts should be so difficult to maintain, in the peculiarly morbid and susceptible feelings of those who are conscious of holding a ques-

\* Address of the Baptist Total Abstinence Society in Newcastle.

tionable position amongst their fellow-beings,—in short, of having lost something of their respectability and high standing in the opinion of the world. Those upon whom the breath of censure has never breathed, whose character, in its unsullied purity and firm rectitude has never been assailed, are fearless of the consequences of making an eccentric movement in a generous or noble cause. Any idle or narrow-minded suspicion attaching itself to them, they are prepared utterly to despise. It cannot harm them by its probability, and consequently they regard it not. But the former case is widely different from this, and therefore it is far more difficult for the tempted than the untempted man, in mixing with society, to bear, as he must, the vulgar and unfeeling insinuation that he abstains because he has not self-government enough to prevent his falling into excess. Again and again has this low-minded remark been made to the writer of these pages, without produc-

ing any other sensation than one of regret, that her friends should be so ignorant of the deep and spirit-stirring principle upon which the temperance cause depends; but had the same remarks been made to some of her acquaintance—some whom she would gladly ask the wings of more than earthly love to shield, what agony would this ill-timed observation have caused to thrill almost equally through her heart and theirs!

And what an absurdity is this insinuation, even when most harmless! As a method of reasoning amounting to precisely the same thing, as if we should say to a friend who had subscribed to the support of a blind asylum—"I am sorry to find, by your name being on the list, that you are anticipating blindness. I never knew before that you were afflicted with weak eyes."

Enough then must already be known by those who have paid the least attention to the subject, to shew that individuals now under

temptation are not likely to save themselves, and that if anything effectual remains to be done to save them, it must be by the combined and benevolent efforts of the sober part of the community. There must in fact be a decided barrier formed against the first step in the downward career of intemperance, and that must be by a society of persons stronger than themselves. "It would be too much," observes the enlightened Thomas Spencer, "to expect one individual philanthropist to work out the reformation of the drunkard; nor is it probable that an individual drunkard would have courage to stand alone as an abstainer, amidst the jeers of his companions. But if a society were formed of benevolent men, for the express purpose; and if the enslaved victims could be encouraged by the influence of example to break off their yoke, and burst their bonds, then would philanthropy have a cheering prospect of enlarged success; and then might the master evil of intemperance be gra-



dually destroyed. *Such a society has been formed—it is the Total Abstinence Society."*

That such a society, opposed as it is to the strong habits and stronger inclinations of mankind, has not only been formed, but has prospered beyond the most sanguine expectations, both in this and other countries, we have abundant proof. I quote from a record of what has been done in America, as well as what has been effected nearer home. I quote from the Eighth Report of the American Temperance Society, where it is stated that at that time in America more than 8000 temperance societies had been formed, containing it was thought more than 1,500,000 members, more than 4000 distilleries had been stopped, and more than 8000 merchants had ceased to sell ardent spirits, and many of them had ceased to sell any kind of intoxicating liquors; also upwards of 1200 vessels then sailed from American ports, in which no intoxicating liquors were used.

The next statement I shall transcribe is one of a still more cheering nature, inasmuch as it touches the patriot hearts of Britain, by approaching more closely her beloved shores. It is contained in the excellent summary of temperance proceedings conveyed by the first address of the National Society, which I would earnestly recommend to the attention of every reader.

“ At the ‘ Great National Banquet ’ which lately took place in Dublin, Lord Morpeth, after giving particulars of the return of outrages reported in the constabulary office, by which it appeared, that since 1836 they had diminished one-third, proceeded to remark, that ‘ of the heaviest offences, such as homicides, outrages upon the person, assaults with attempt to murder, aggravated assaults, cutting and maiming, there were—

In 1837	.	.	.	12,096
1838	.	.	.	11,058
1839	.	.	.	1,077
1840	.	.	.	173’

Facts like these require no comment—the mere abstinence from one article of beverage has done more in two or three years to diminish crime, than could ever be accomplished by all the powers of legislature, the activity of police, and the horrors of military force. But it is not in the diminution of crime alone, that we see the cheering and happy fruits of the temperance reformation in Ireland. The returns of the savings bank prove, that improvidence has diminished, whilst domestic comfort, intelligence, and wealth have rapidly increased.

“The depositors in the savings bank were, in July, August, and September, 1838, 7,264; 1839, 7,433; 1840, 8,953; 1841, 9,585; whilst in 1842, the increase is still greater: and it is stated, that at one of the branches of these valuable institutions, the pressure of depositors was so great, that the committee had to open the bank another evening in the week. We find, too, that this prudent provision for fu-

ture wants has not prevented a large and rapid increase of present domestic comfort and home enjoyment, for in the report of the Waterford Temperance Society, it is stated, that 'In the city and suburbs, there are at least one hundred thousand pounds' worth of value in the cottages of the labouring classes, in clothes and furniture, over and above what they possessed two years ago, besides a considerable increase of lodgments in the savings bank, made principally by the working classes. The healthy state of the city during this inclement year, and the last report of the fever hospital, speak loudly in favour of the cause. We may add a recent testimony from the same quarter, which appears in a letter from the mayor of Waterford, addressed to the vice-president of the Waterford Total Abstinence Society, and dated the 21st of October, 1842.

‘MY DEAR SIR,

‘My period of magisterial office, now on the eve of closing, has afforded me many opportunities of judging of the working of the temperance system, and of estimating the advantages it confers on the community at large.

‘The fact is notorious, that since the temperance movement, *the actual amount of crime in this city has been considerably diminished, and that comfort, happiness, and plenty supply the place of wretchedness and destitution, once unhappily so prevalent.* I say the fact is notorious, because the diminished duties of the magistrates, and of the judges of assizes, amply testify to its truth, *and in my professional capacity as a medical man, I can fully bear out the advantages of the total abstinence system.* In the Leper Hospital (general Infirmary of the city), over the medical and surgical departments of which I preside, as senior medical officer, the number of casualties admitted has recently diminished. In particular, I may

mention, that formerly we had constant applications for the admission of women seriously injured by their brutal husbands when in a state of intoxication; I feel gratified in being able to state that *not a single instance has presented itself this current year.* This single fact speaks volumes in favour of the domestic happiness conferred by temperance. Some pledge-breakers have been brought before me, but it must be a matter of pride and of congratulation to every lover of morality and good order, to observe that the system has been so generally and steadily adhered to, and that a people so notorious for intemperate habits, should now be proverbial for the very reverse; but bright as is the dawn, I believe that it is only the harbinger of a brighter day, for I am far from thinking that we now witness the entire extent of the boon which the temperance system is capable of conferring. The rising generation, I anticipate, will be benefited by it even more largely than the

present; and I trust that the temperance pledge will be handed down to distant ages, the memorial of the moral regeneration of the country.

I have the honour to be, my dear Sir,

Your obedient, humble Servant,

THOMAS L. MACKESSEY,

Mayor of Waterford.'

“ Sir B. Morris and Captain Newport, two of the magistrates who attended the total abstinence meeting when the above letter was read, most fully confirmed the statements it contained. We might proceed to prove, from the increased number of reading-rooms and schools, and from the rapid extension of mechanics' institutes, that the intellectual elevation of the people is keeping pace with their moral and physical improvement. Indeed, the whole picture which Ireland now presents of the delightful proofs of temperance reformation, may well rouse the feeling of astonish-

ment, that more should be required to induce any individual to support by his example so simple and effectual a means of securing such an amount of public and private good."

But notwithstanding all these encouraging facts, and the strong evidence they bring along with them that the principles of total abstinence are peculiarly adapted to the wants of the people at large, one thing is still wanting to the furtherance of this benevolent institution; and strange to say, it is the co-operation of the higher classes, and especially of the religious part of the community. Happily for this cause it has prospered, and we trust, with the Divine blessing, will continue to prosper, even should such co-operation still be withheld; nor can we fear its failure while the comparatively few individuals of this class, who have already given it their sanction, remain to be its able, zealous, and consistent advocates.

Nor is it the least encouraging feature in



the aspect of this interesting subject, that those who have embraced the principles of total abstinence—those who have formed themselves into a consistent and organized body, purely for the good of their fellow-creatures, have been chiefly individuals in the lower walks of life—hard-working men, and industrious women, who could ill afford to lose one of their accustomed means of indulgence, and, perhaps, had no other to give up. Had the case been otherwise—had enlightened men and influential women come forward in the first instance to recommend this system to others, by adopting it themselves, it is probable we should have felt less confidence in the great moral power which is now at work. It is probable we should have trusted more to our political economists, our public speakers, and our ministers of religion, and when they failed in the consistency of their example, the working classes might have failed with them. We might have

thought, too, that the prospect was a mere chimera which would not stand the test of time. But as the subject now presents itself to our consideration, it bears an impress more than human; for, what but the Spirit of God could have put it into the hearts of hundreds of thousands amongst the poorest and most ignorant members of the human family, to conceive a project at once so vast in its extent—so pure in its operation, yet so rich in its benevolence and love?

## CHAPTER V.

PUBLIC OBJECTIONS TO JOINING THE TEMPERANCE  
SOCIETY.

WE must, however, still speak with regret of that want of co-operation in the temperance reformation, which prevails amongst the higher classes of society, as well as amongst religious professors generally; and we do this chiefly on the ground of the desirableness of rendering the temperance society itself as respectable as it can be made in the opinion of the world. Were the victims rescued from intemperance, by the same means, and at the same time converted to the religion of Christ Jesus, they would know that to endure the scorn, and the persecution of men, was a part of the discipline to which, as faithful followers

of their blessed Master, they ought to be willing to submit. But in the ranks of intemperance we have to do with human beings upon whom this wrong knowledge has never operated, and we must, consequently, adapt our means to the condition of man in such a state. We must consider, too, what is in human nature—what are its tendencies, and how they are generally found to operate, in order that we may not require of it efforts beyond its power to maintain. We must, consequently, not expect that a number of men, whom the vice of intemperance has already consigned to the deepest degradation, will arise of themselves and unite into a distinct body, thus tacitly declaring before the world who and what they have been. Yet, even if so great a miracle as this should be effected, what then would become of that still greater number who have not yet wholly fallen—who are still struggling against temptation, and whose situation at

once inspires us with more of pity, and of hope. These, of all persons, would be the last to join such a degraded and stigmatized society as one composed exclusively of reformed drunkards; and it is for such as these—the tempted, the wavering, and the still-respected and beloved, that I would implore the consideration of those individuals amongst the enlightened portion of the community, who have hitherto stood aloof from the question altogether, or who have treated it with contempt. But more earnestly still I would implore the exercise of Christian benevolence in this cause, on the part of those who preach the glad tidings of peace on earth, and good will towards men. “If your name had not been there,” said a reformed drunkard to his minister, “I never should have been a member of a temperance society.”

There must be some powerfully operating reason why individuals, who esteem it not

only a duty but a privilege to come forward in every other good cause, should be so backward in this. It cannot surely be unwillingness to submit to a mere personal privation; for were this the case, it would show at once that their own personal indulgence was esteemed of more importance, than the saving of their fellow creatures from one of the greatest of calamities. Oh! but their health—they have tried it, and it did not agree with them. They had a cough, or a fit of rheumatism, or a weakness of the throat, during the short time they abstained! Kind, Christian friends, warm-hearted, devoted, and zealous labourers for the good of the community! how often have the most delicate and feeble amongst you gone forth on errands of mercy, in the summer's heat, and in the winter's cold? gone forth, too, at times when, had a physician been consulted, he would have pronounced the act a dangerous, or at least an injurious one. How often has the faithful

minister stood up to preach, or visited the poor and comfortless abodes of his people, at the risk of a headache, a sore throat, or damp feet? How often has the father of a family called together his household for evening worship, when, as a mere matter of personal benefit, he would have been better laid upon a couch of rest? How often has the tender mother, shrouding herself from the angry storm, penetrated into the chambers of the sick, to dispense to them more than the bread of this life? Do not mock us then with the assertion that you are willing, but afraid. We are incapable of believing it, when we witness daily on your part such noble acts of magnanimity, of faith, and love. No, you are not willing, and the only justifiable reason that can be assigned for your unwillingness is, that you are not yet fully persuaded in your own minds that the thing itself is good. Here, then, occurs a very important question—are you in a state of *willingness* to be

*persuaded?* Are you making it a subject of prayer, that, if really your duty, you may see that it is so? Are you doing this, or are you putting the thought far from you, as not worthy to be entertained by one whose office is to instruct, admonish, and exhort; but not to exemplify a personal instance of self-denial, practised entirely upon the strength of that love which sent a Saviour into the world, and which remains to be the surest test by which his disciples are known on earth.

But in addition to the ministers, and other direct advocates of religious truth, there is a vast proportion of the respectable part of the community who care for none of these things; yet whose influence, if thrown into the scale of temperance, instead of accumulating, as it does at present, on the opposite side, would at once afford the most decided and efficient help to those who are now sorely tempted, wavering, and about to fall. If, for instance,



in any of our large towns, men of importance and wealth—men who take a leading part both in business and society—men who originate and forward great public measures, and who at the same time enjoy the sociability of rational and agreeable amusements—if such men would, in any considerable number, give their names and their advocacy to the temperance cause, they would raise at once a glorious banner of encouragement and of hope, under whose protection the tempted and weak of all classes, but more especially young men, who are most frequently assailed by this insidious and malignant enemy, would bind themselves, by hundreds and by thousands, to abstain. It would then be no stigma either to youth or age. It would cease to be either singular or disgraceful; and he, over whom his mother's heart was yearning—with whom his father had pleaded in vain, would then be able to pass over to the side of safety, without any other individual know-

ing that he had ever been otherwise than safe.

And how many parents at this very time would give the whole of their worldly possessions to purchase the protection and attractiveness of such a society for their sons! But let me ask them a serious question. Fathers! have you come forward and signed your names by way of laying the first stone in this great bulwark to preserve your family, and your country? Mothers! I dare not ask of you. Let shame and confusion cover us, that we should have seen all that is transpiring more or less remotely in connexion with every British home, that we should have marked the growing curse upon our own household hearth, and yet should so long have refused to deny ourselves the tempting draught, which we knew was one of death to those we loved. Yes, I must ask of you, kind-hearted mothers of England, why in this instance you are guilty of a cruelty so great? Would you not

strip from your delicate limbs the garment of pride to clothe that beloved one? Would you not share with him your last morsel of bread, even if it left you famishing? Would you not give him the draught of water brought to cool your burning fever? And will you—can you—dare you persist in a system of self-indulgence, which, though innocent to you, may endanger both his temporal and eternal happiness?

I repeat, there must be some powerful cause which such individuals do not tell, operating in such cases against their acting a more decided and a more generous part. There must be some cause. Can it be their own love of the indulgence? If so, it is high time it was given up, for their safety as well as for that of others. Indeed it is chiefly in cases like these, that we are made to see the entire reasonableness of the system of total abstinence; for if the indulgence be easily resigned, a very slight consideration of the

subject in connexion with our duty to others, will be sufficient to induce us to give it up. While, if it be difficult to resign, it becomes clear that we are ourselves in danger, and our motives for self-denial are thus increased a hundred-fold.

So far as I have been able to discover in mixing with society, one of the most openly avowed, and most frequent objections to joining the ranks of total abstinence, is that already alluded to, a regard for personal health, originating in the mistaken but popular belief, that such stimulants are necessary for its preservation. It is however a curious fact, that persons who argue in this manner as regards themselves, are invariably such as suffer from some malady either real or imaginary, and sometimes from an accumulation of maladies, which they still persist in asserting, that they use stimulating beverages for the sole purpose of preventing. Now if such persons drank wine, or beer, or spirits, or all

three, and at the same time were in perfect health, I confess they would be formidable enemies to the temperance cause; but with them it is always "*my*" gout, "*my*" rheumatism, "*my*" want of digestion, or "*my*" general debility, on account of which this potent medicine is taken, but which, by their own shewing, it has hitherto proved wholly insufficient to remove.

Without entering generally upon the question of health, a question which has been circumstantially examined by judges more able than myself, and in relation to which many important and interesting facts are now laid before the public, tending clearly to prove, that, instead of suffering from total abstinence, most persons by whom it has been fairly tried, have experienced not only no injury to their health, but considerable benefit; I may perhaps be allowed to add a few words on the subject of my own experience, which may possibly derive additional weight from the

circumstance of my having been, for many years of my life, an obstinate disbeliever in the efficacy of temperance principles to effect any lasting or extensive good; while of all respectable societies, that for the promotion of total abstinence—that which I now esteem it an honour and a privilege to advocate, would have been most repulsive to my feelings to join. Indeed, such was my contempt for the system altogether, that I often pronounced it to be a mockery of common sense, and at the same time frequently asserted my belief, that nothing could be more likely than the restraint of a public pledge to create an immediate inclination to break it.

For two years—years I may say of total ignorance on this point, during which I took no pains to make myself better informed, I treated the subject with the utmost contempt whenever it was brought under my notice. By degrees, however, it began to wear a different aspect before the world in general,

and facts were too powerful in its favour to be disputed. By degrees it began also to assume with me somewhat more of a personal character. I could not see how I was right while indulging in what was so fearfully destructive to others, and to some whom I had known and loved. Yet such was the force of habit; such my willingness to believe what doctors told me, that wine was necessary to my health, at that time far from good; and such, also, was my dependence upon stimulants, for increasing the strength of which I often felt miserably in want, that three years more elapsed before I had the resolution to free myself practically, entirely, and I now trust for ever, from the slavery of this dangerous habit.

Four years of total abstinence from everything of an intoxicating nature, it has now been my happy lot to experience; and if the improvement in my health and spirits, and the increase of my strength during that time,

be any proof in favour of the practice, I am one of those who ought especially to thank God for the present, and take courage for the future.

Like many other women, and especially those who are exempt from the necessity of active exertion, I was, while in the habit of taking wine for my health, subject to almost constant suffering from a mysterious kind of sinking, which rendered me at times wholly unfit either for mental or bodily effort, but which I always found to be removed by a glass of wine. My spirits, too, partook of the malady, for I was equally subject to fits of depression, which also were relieved, in some degree, by the same remedies. During the four years in which I have now entirely abstained from the use of such remedies, I have been a total stranger to these distressing sensations of sinking and exhaustion; and I say this with thankfulness, because I consider such ailments infinitely more trying than ab-



absolute pain. That time of the day at which it is frequently recommended to take a glass of wine and a biscuit, I now spend as pleasantly as any other portion of the four-and-twenty hours, without either; and when fatigued by wholesome exercise, which is a totally different thing from the exhaustion above alluded to, I want nothing more than rest or food, and have not a symptom remaining of what I used to experience when I felt occasionally as if my life was ebbing away. Thus I am fully persuaded, in my own mind, and by my own experience, confirming as it does the testimony of many able and important judges, that the very medicine we take in this manner to give us strength, does in reality produce an increase of faintness, lassitude, and general debility.

Perhaps I may be allowed further to add, that the four years of abstinence I have already passed, have been marked by no ordinary degree of vicissitude, and something

more than an average share of mental and bodily exertion; but whether at home or abroad, in health or in sickness, in joy or in sorrow, I have never really felt the want of the stimulants above alluded to; and I am now led into this lengthened detail of my own experience, purely from the hope, that, by adding facts to arguments, and facts in which I cannot be mistaken, I may encourage others to make the same experiment. It is true that any little ailment I may still retain, even the slightest ache or pain, is always attributed by some of my friends to a want of the stimulus of wine; but still I believe there are few ladies whose health, for all purposes of exertion as well as enjoyment, would bear any comparison with mine.

So much then for the constitution of woman, in one instance out of the many in which the experiment of total abstinence has been tried with success; nor has the constitution of man been found less capable of bearing

this privation. Indeed, my personal testimony ought not to pass unsupported by that of one, who, before temperance societies were thought of, and in a distant and a different clime, was first led to the adoption of temperance principles, purely from regard to the safety of the semi-barbarous people over whose habits, in a moral point of view, his example powerfully operated. He was then convinced, that if others who had less power of self-restraint than himself, could not use this indulgence without excess, it was right for him, as a minister of religion, to give it up altogether. On returning to England, however, he adopted, under medical advice, the habits of society in this respect, until the temperance question was presented to his mind in all its serious importance; and it is under a system of total abstinence, not recommended by his medical advisers, that, after a lingering and distressing illness, he now enjoys the blessing of renovated health.

It is not, however, on the question of health alone, that I am prepared to sympathize with the weak of my own sex who may be anxious, but afraid, to make the experiment; for I know that it is the sensitive but often wounded *mind* of woman, which, more than her feeble body, places her under the power of this temptation. I know that it is too frequently her difficult part to live in one world of interest, and to act in another; I know that in society she is often imperatively called upon to be agreeable, when the power to be so is wanting; and I know, too, there are passages in human life which to her are like the falling of a deep cold wave upon the heart, from which it sweeps away all other thoughts and feelings. I know also it sometimes happens, that all this has to be concealed beneath a smooth and smiling brow; that the thoughts thus scattered have to be called back for practical and immediate use; while a manner disengaged, a frank and cordial greeting to indifferent friends, and a

free and cheerful tone given to general conversation, are the contributions she is expected to pay to society—the duties in which she must not fail. I speak not of distinguished individuals—theirs is even a heavier tax than this. I speak of what we are all subject to, in such cases, for instance, as that of visiting at the house of a friend who has invited a party to meet us. It is possible that, before the arrival of the party, a temporary indisposition may have disqualified us from entertaining others; or a letter with tidings sad to us, may have been put into our hands; or a thousand things may have happened, any one of which may have been sufficient to sink the heart of woman.

Now in this simple and familiar instance, I believe we shall all be able to recognise one out of many cases, in which women are peculiarly liable to have recourse to artificial stimulus in order to support them, as they think, *creditably*, before their friends; and if in such

a case as this they yield to the temptation of taking only a single glass beyond what is consistent with their safety, how often, amidst the variable lights and shadows of human experience, must their safety be endangered from the same cause.

I speak then of this, as well as of many other trials which beset the path of woman, feelingly and experimentally; and still I would say—fear not. One single effort conscientiously and promptly made, will enable you to pass through all the duties of social intercourse better without such stimulants, than with them. I will not pretend to say, as some do, that the effort is easily made. We forget the weakness of human nature when we call it easy; but I will say, that the difficulty is all in anticipation, and in the lengthened dragging out of a half-formed purpose. Two years of trial I myself endured in this manner, before my resolution was fully carried out; but no sooner was an entire surrender

made of inclination to a sense of duty, than all temptation vanished, all trial was at an end; while the act of totally abstaining became so perfectly easy, as to call forth no other feelings than those of gratitude and joy, that I was thus enabled, for the sake of others, to share in the self-denials of the tempted, and the privations of the poor.

After all, however, there is a point beyond which no subject should be pressed, when it touches upon the health of others. For ourselves we may judge and act; but for no other human being of competent mind have we a right to lay down the law, because no less various than the minds and the characters of mankind, are the bodily ailments under which they suffer, and the remedies which they consequently require. Medical advice too must often be consulted, and when it is, the rules of the temperance society fully recognise its right to be obeyed. But still I would ask for this view of the subject, as for that of

religious duty, a candid, serious, and impartial consideration; and more especially where the experiment is made, that it should be made fairly. If your abstinence is not entire, the experiment is far indeed from being a fair one; for so long as the habit of taking even a little is kept up, the inclination to take more is kept up also, and consequently the trial and the difficulty remain. If also, during the time that you abstain, you sit up late at night, neglect to take exercise in the open air, or in any other manner fail to adopt the most rational and obvious means of preserving health, it cannot be said that the experiment is a fair one; more especially when, as is too frequently the case, every malady occurring during this period is charged upon the newly formed habit of total abstinence.

Here, then, I must leave the subject of health to the private consideration of the candid and benevolent reader, trusting that those who are not accustomed to set the



question of health in opposition to the exercise of their mental and bodily energies in the furtherance of other charitable objects, will, at least, have the fairness not to draw back from this, under the apprehension of any little risk they may incur in the way of mere personal comfort or convenience.

There are, however, other startling objections besides that of health, brought forward against the temperance movement, and especially by religious professors, who are in the habit of questioning the desirableness of supporting it, because it does not make people religious. But, can anything be more at variance with the practice and sentiments of the most enlightened part of mankind on other subjects, than this far-fetched and untenable argument. Why, the support of good government, and the administration of laws, do not make people religious; yet, who doubts the benefit they confer upon society? Teaching people to read does not make them

religious; yet, few in the present day are prepared to question the advantages of education. It is a fact too evident to need assertion, that the habitually intemperate man is not in a condition either to read his Bible, or to pray; and that owing to his selfish indulgence, and the consequent destitution of his family, the wives and children of such persons are, in vast numbers, too ragged and forlorn to be able to attend any place of public worship, or, in the case of the latter, any means of instruction. It is something then, and the serious and charitable portion of the community know it to be something, to put the drunkard in a situation to be *able* to read his Bible and to pray—to be *able* to listen to, and understand those truths upon which his happiness hereafter depends—to be able also, in addition to this, to provide for his wife and family, so that they too may receive the benefit of instruction, and join in the privileges of public worship. More

than this, the temperance society makes no pretension to do. By the universal suffrage of its members, a law is passed amongst themselves for the physical and moral benefit of the whole body; and if, as we are well assured, there is a vast and cheering number from amongst the reclaimed, who have not rested satisfied with a mere physical and moral reformation, but have afterwards been brought to a saving knowledge of the truths of the Gospel, we claim for the temperance society no further merit in this great work, than that of having first restored to them the healthy action of their mental powers, so that they might listen to instruction *clothed* in their *right minds*.

We presume not to suppose that in the resources of Divine mercy there are not means of sufficient potency to reclaim the most abject and abandoned of human beings, without the instrumentality of his fellow-man; nor do we dispute that if the words of

the faithful minister *could reach* the ear and the *understanding* of the victim of intemperance, he would stand, as to the means of conversion, on the same footing with the victims of every other vice. But the difference between him and others, and that which places him beyond the pale of religious influence, is the fact that he cannot hear,—that his understanding is incapacitated, and, consequently, that his heart is sealed. What, then, is to be done? You must first awake the sleeping man, before you can make him understand that his life is in danger; and this is precisely what the temperance society professes, hopes, and trusts to effect.

“We can appeal to clergymen of the Church of England,” says the address already quoted, “who have made extensive inquiries of their brother clergymen, as to the number of persons who have been reclaimed from drunkenness under their ministry, and it is confidently asserted as the result of that

inquiry, that not one clergyman in twenty, after all their years of labour in the pulpit and in the parish, can point to a single instance of a person in ordinary health being reclaimed from this particular sin\*. And yet the Total Abstinence Society can point to thousands of instances in which, in a few short years, by the blessing of God on the temperance pledge, the temptation has been overcome, and the victim reclaimed. But more than this, not a few of those who have been thus raised from the lowest depths of sin and degradation—who were not long since to be found in the haunts of vice, blaspheming the sacred name, are now to be seen at their places of worship, offering up their humble and sincere thanksgiving and praise to Him who in His mercy has been pleased to bless so simple a means, in bringing them first to re-

\* This statement is taken from "*An Address of a Clergyman to his Brother Clergymen*," published by the Church of England Total Abstinence Society, Tract, No. 5.

flection, then to attend upon religious worship, and finally to repentance and saving faith in a compassionate Redeemer."

But beyond the objection already stated, it is often said, that "we find nothing about total abstinence in the Bible." The truth of this assertion is freely acknowledged, as well as that the Bible contains nothing about public schools, particular modes of worship, or Bible societies; but if it contains nothing about total abstinence, it contains much about temperance, and much about excess; and if the one cannot be ensured, and the other avoided, without total abstinence, there is nothing said in the Bible to prevent this simple and harmless alternative being resorted to.

I must here be allowed, instead of offering any observations of my own, to quote from a sermon by the Rev. W. H. Turner, vicar of Banwell, a short and most satisfactory statement of what are the sentiments prevailing.

generally on this part of the subject amongst the members of the temperance society.

“I am well aware of the specious objection which has been raised, that as drunkenness was a sin known at the time of our Saviour’s incarnation, and he set no example of total abstinence, that consequently his example is against us: nay, more, that if it is now insisted on as a point of Christian obligation, it would be imputing to Christ and his apostles a failure in their duty.

“In meeting this objection, I do not wish to dwell upon the fact, that the wines of Judea were widely different from the intoxicating liquors now causing so much sin and misery in our land. I would merely ask those who thus argue in consequence of Christ’s having used wine, whether it can be doubted, that in the many changes of human society, circumstances may not arise which might make what is a most innocent habit at one period, a very dangerous, inexpedient,

and sinful one at another? It was never intended that Christ's example *in things indifferent* (or not in themselves sinful), should be thus applied—it is the spirit rather than the letter of it we must use. His example, in the letter, applies only to the age in which he lived; in its spirit, to every situation in which man can be placed in this the period of his earthly trial. Now drunkenness in Judea was not the great stumbling-block to the Gospel, as it is at this moment in England: it was a sin there comparatively little known, whilst here it is the leading, besetting, and almost overwhelming one.

“But it will not be denied, I think, that the Apostle Paul must have known the mind, as well as what had been the practice of his divine Master; and do we find him urging that, because Christ ate or drank any particular article, that he had therefore a right to use it under all circumstances, or that it might not <sup>\*</sup> even be sinful in him to do so!



Quite the reverse; whilst regarding such things as neither good nor evil in themselves, he is guided by the effect which his using them may produce on the eternal interests of his fellow-men. And such is the application we make of the Saviour's conduct, believing that we cannot have a better judge, or a more experienced commentator on all his actions, than St. Paul.

“The great principle which our Saviour gives us, and which his whole example enforces, as to our conduct towards our fellow-creatures, is to love them as ourselves. To bring His example in things indifferent, so as in any way to militate against this principle, must be wrong.”

## CHAPTER VI.

## PRIVATE OBJECTIONS, AND GENERAL ENCOURAGEMENTS.

HAVING glanced slightly at some of the most serious objections to total abstinence, and such as will be found in many of the temperance publications more ably and more fully refuted, we will turn our attention to those of a less serious nature, though one can hardly help suspecting that the real root of the matter lies in some of these. I will, therefore, call them private objections, because though powerful in their operation upon individual conduct, they are not frequently brought forward in public, nor made grounds of objection, except in the private intercourse of life. To examine these objections in detail, however, would be to collect together some of the :

irrational modes of reasoning, and some of the most partial and unfounded statements, which have ever been laid before the world. A few only of these I will therefore point out, not as being worthy of refutation, but simply as proofs of the unfair and superficial manner in which the subject is too frequently treated, even by persons who professedly hold the welfare of society, and the good of their fellow-creatures, at heart.

“What!” exclaim the lovers of what is called good cheer, and the advocates of the rights of the people, “would you deny the poor man his beer? Do penance as you like yourselves, but never attempt to deprive a free-born English labourer of the roast beef and brown ale of his country.” Did the English labourer always manage to get his roast beef along with his brown ale, less would perhaps be said on the subject; but, unfortunately, in too many cases, the beef is wholly wanting. The advocates of total abstinence

therefore reply, “we *deny* the poor labourer nothing. He is a free agent when he takes the temperance pledge, and is quite at liberty to withdraw his name whenever he wishes to discontinue the practice. But we invite him, and we do this with the most cordial desire to promote his welfare—we invite him to exchange his beer for bread, for decent clothing, and for a comfortable and respectable home, all which he has sacrificed for beer alone. We invite him to give up one article of diet, and that not an essential one, in order that he may purchase a sufficiency of wholesome food to satisfy the hunger of himself, his wife, and his children—in order that he may provide for his family a home, give them the advantages of education, and lay up a store for seasons of sickness, or of old age.”

Again, it is said—“Why take up the subject of temperance in particular? Why be so mightily concerned about that, when so many other kinds of reformation are needed?” I am

not aware that the advocates of temperance are singularly negligent of the wants of their fellow-creatures in other respects; and even if they should throw more of their energy and influence into this cause than any other, it might surely be permitted them, as well as others, according to the bent of their own minds, or their own views of personal duty, to choose the field of usefulness in which to labour. In every branch of science and philosophy, as well as in all arts and manufactures, men are not quarrelled with, or considered more foolish on other points, because they give their time and attention chiefly to one object of pursuit or investigation; and why should it not be the same in that higher philosophy which has the moral good of mankind in view? Why should certain individuals not give the energy of their minds, and the weight of their influence, to the support of schools, asylums, or any other charitable institution whatever, without being accused of absurdity,

because they do not give an equal share of attention to every other benevolent institution in the world? It would indeed require that the mind of man should be supernatural in its vastness and its power, to divide his attention equally amongst all the charitable institutions existing in the present day, without reducing the operation of his benevolence to little more than the mere bestowment of a passing thought upon each.

Then there is another very important objection, and one which must be treated with more gravity, inasmuch as it arises from the fact that the temperance society is joined in by persons of all religious denominations, and even by those of no religion at all; and if they meet together in this society for the purpose of being less irrational, less disorderly, and less vicious—why not? If a mighty river should overflow its banks, and threaten to inundate the land, should we refuse to lend a helping hand to construct an embankment

for the purpose of keeping back the desolating waters, because here and there a man without religion, or whose religion differed from our own, was engaged in the great work? Most assuredly we should not; and if not in a case of physical calamity, how much less ought we to hesitate on the same grounds in stemming that destructive tide of moral evil which has long been waging deadly war against our domestic, social, and national prosperity?—more especially since it seems impossible that our religious sentiments should in the slightest degree be compromised by pledging ourselves, with whoever might choose to join us, simply to the advance of temperance and sobriety.

There is, however, an objection raised by some against this very pledge, which is called a vow, in consequence of which those who sign it are supposed to be under a sort of bondage, in itself neither rational, agreeable, nor altogether right. But I must here quote again on the subject from the societies' ad-

dress, as conveying the sentiments of many rather than of one. It is here observed, that "such objectors do not scruple to sign an agreement for their own pecuniary advantage, in the shape of a lease, a deed, or a bill, &c. Why, then, should they object to sign an agreement for their own moral or physical advantage, or from the higher motive of benefiting others? There are, no doubt, many individuals who could abstain without signing any agreement, and who may therefore, apart from any scruple, consider it of no importance: let such remember, however, that they abstain, not so much for their own sakes as for the sake of others, and that the signing of a pledge has proved of infinite importance to the poor drunkard, and been the blessed means of reclaiming thousands, whose every previous effort to reform *without signing* had failed; why then should they object to encourage by their example that which can do them no harm, but



which has been, and may still be, of immense benefit to a poor fallen or falling brother? Let us view the matter in the generous spirit of the great apostle, who declared, '*To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*' Would that this disinterested and benevolent spirit dwelt in every heart, and our appeal on behalf of the suffering victims of intemperance would surely be answered by discontinuing the custom which constantly *sows the seed* from which all their miseries spring."

An exclusive regard for our own individual benefit is natural to all human beings, and if not pursued at the expense of injury to others, the principle is certainly good as far as it goes; because, to use the words of the old adage, "if every one would mend one," the world would soon be better than it is. Thus we cannot but rejoice to observe that the system of total abstinence from intoxicating beve-

rages is gradually progressing amongst individuals; that there is now no difficulty in refusing to take wine in company, and that, say what men will, the *habits* of the friends of abstinence are obtaining countenance and credit from society in general. No one can fail to be convinced of this, who looks back to the state of society in England twenty or thirty years ago; and while we are well aware that a large proportion of the families by whom intemperance is now discouraged where it was once allowed, would disdain the thought of associating themselves with a society of total abstiners, the fact is very evident that the moving of this great question throughout this and other countries, and the awakening of public attention to so important a subject, has had much to do with the increased regard for moderation prevailing in respectable families, and the diminution of intemperance amongst the people at large.

Good, however, as all this unquestionably

is, it has nothing whatever to do with the establishment of a respectable society, under the encouragement of which the weak and the tempted may find safety without disgrace; and those who practise only upon themselves, and weigh carefully all their own feelings, whether for or against the system as it operates upon their own health and comfort, know little of the enjoyment of those far-stretching views of benevolence which embrace the good of the whole human family, and which glance over every little symptom of personal inconvenience, as not worthy of being thought of for a moment, in connexion with so vast and important a scheme for the advancement of their fellow-beings in the scale of virtue and of happiness.

But again, as regards the pledge, it should always be remembered, that it is only considered binding so long as the name of the individual remains enrolled amongst those of other members of the society; that those who

thus subscribe their names to a compact entered into by individuals for the benefit of the whole body, may withdraw them whenever they think fit; and the fact that many persons do so is surely sufficient evidence of perfect liberty of choice and free-agency being allowed to all.

Those who have paid the least attention to the subject, must see that to the tempted the pledge is necessary, because it is a means exactly calculated to operate as a check at the only moment when a check can be availing—at the moment when the weak are hesitating whether or not they will take just a *little*; and if those who object to the pledge would be kind enough to propose any more agreeable plan by which the same kind of check could be brought into operation in an equally efficacious manner, I do not think the friends of the Total Abstinence Society are so wedded to their own system as not to be willing to exchange it for a better.

It has frequently happened, in consequence of the fallibility of human reason, that the first system adopted for the prevention of any particular kind of evil, or the promotion of any good, has not been by any means the best. Indeed, the very defects of the system in its early operation have awakened a spirit of opposition, which in its turn has originated another and a better system for carrying out the same object. Thus we have some of us looked long and earnestly to the avowed opponents of the total abstinence scheme of reformation, for some other—some nobler, and, at the same time, more effectual device, for accomplishing the same great end; but while all agree that the object is good, and all desire that the absolute drunkard should be reclaimed, not one of these enlightened individuals has yet favoured us with a better scheme than our own; and until they do so, we must be satisfied to go on upon our present plan, by no means discouraged by what we already see and know of its results.

Often as the motives of human beings are mistaken in their transactions one with another, often as the actions of the benevolent are misunderstood, and a mean or selfish character assigned to feelings the most noble and disinterested, never have such motives, actions, or feelings, been more grossly misrepresented, than in reference to the temperance pledge. Oh! could such cavillers be made to believe me when I say, there are sensations of thrilling interest connected with the signing of this pledge, which heroes well might envy, and rich men give their gold to buy. Why, on that very page, disfigured by the unskilled lettering of a ploughman's hand, there are tears of such intense and exquisite delight, as unsophisticated Nature weeps when her emotions are too strong for smiles.

Upon that page, perhaps, the fond and faithful wife is gazing, heedless of the passing crowd. Her thoughts go back to the dark ruined home she has just left without a hope, and to her poor babes, who, weak with

hunger, wept themselves to sleep. With borrowed cloak to hide her destitution, she stole out at the dark hour, and mixing in the crowd, found place amongst her fellows in poverty and distress, who came at least to *hear* of a strange but simple plan for calling back such wanderers as her husband long had been. And now she listens most intently, for the language is all such as comes home to her experience, and is level with her understanding. The speaker must have known her case. He tells of hope! but no—that never can be hers! If *he* were here—perhaps—and then a deep, deep sigh bursts from her lips; but she listens still, and more intently, to the speaker's moving words, until her heart becomes too full; and she looks round to see if any amongst her neighbours—for of friends she has none left—are there to profit by those words of touching truth. What ails the woman? Whom has she seen amongst the crowd? Her cheek is flushed with burning

crimson, and her eyes are bright with living fire. It is—it must be him! She cannot be mistaken in her husband's form, still beautiful to her. Far back amongst the crowd he stands with folded arms, his gaze intent upon the speaker's face. No smile of thoughtless folly flits across his brow, but a deep earnestness is stamped on every feature as he gazes on. But what is that which moves him now? A simple tale of woman's truth. The wife beholds him dash the tear-drop from his eye. A gathering mist is in her own, but she forgets it all; nothing is present with her but that other self—that life in which alone she lives. Alas! it is all over: the speaker ceases, and the company break up. The wife waits anxiously the moment when her husband shall withdraw, thinking to join him at the door; yet, fearing to intrude too hastily upon his softened feelings, she stands patiently resigned, with folded arms upon her breast, pushed here and there by the



receding crowd, no one of whom takes note of her or hers. Still there is something to be done beside the platform where the speaker stands, and numbers gather to the spot. A book is opened—a pen is offered—a kind and friendly voice invites the company to sign. Make way! the figure of a man advances from behind. Make way! for wonder glances forth from every eye. Behind that figure is a female form—a shadow—a pale faded thing, so feeble that she cannot stand, but leans upon his shoulder with one clasping arm. “There! I have signed!” exclaims the man; “and now, my wife, come home, and let us pray to-night.” Stop but one moment. What a hand is hers! so thin, so trembling; yet she grasps that pen as if it were a rod of iron, to inscribe deep words of mercy in the rock for ever. They pass away together—that penniless and friendless pair, strong in each other’s truth, rich in each other’s love. Weeks glide away—months—or perhaps a year; and they are

seen together now, so happy! with their rosy children, standing at their cottage door—their blazing fire, and clean swept hearth, and plenteous table spread within.

Such are the scenes which cheer on every hand the labourer in the temperance cause, and if this passing sketch convey a slight idea of the interest excited by such scenes, what must be that of entering into the details of family and individual history, where all things temporal and eternal are at stake, and all hang as it were upon the transcript of a single name?

Nor is the situation of the drunkard's wife, sad though it be, the only one which claims our sympathy on these occasions. The little hungry and neglected child of an intemperate mother will sometimes come alone to sign; the old man with grey hairs, whose sons have all gone down before him, with this curse upon them, to untimely graves. And if nothing else affected us in such cases, one

would suppose it might be enough to touch a heart of common mould, to think only of the poverty and destitution of those who thus come forward to make a voluntary surrender of what has become to them their only means of bodily enjoyment. *We* can go home to our abundance, to the cheering hearth, the social board, and to all those delicate and varied substitutes for gratifying pampered appetite, which custom has sanctioned, or ingenuity devised. *We* have all these, but the poor have nothing—more especially the intemperate poor; and, therefore, when they have signed the pledge, they have made what to them was the greatest possible sacrifice which duty could require; because, in proportion as they had previously given themselves up to the destructive habit of existing upon stimulants alone, their homes had become stripped of every other source of comfort or indulgence, and that which was in reality their ruin, had,

in all probability, come to be applied to, in order to make them forget that they had nothing else.

What an effort then is this! what a sacrifice for a poor ignorant man or woman to make! and what a privilege to be enabled to assist them, by making the same sacrifice ourselves, in kind, though by no means in degree! Indeed there is something in looking upon an assembly of persons of this description; in marking the tearful eyes and faded cheeks of those who are struggling against temptation either to themselves or others, as against a mighty foe—there is something too in visiting their destitute and comfortless abodes, and giving them a word of encouragement, from our own experience, in favour of making the experiment at least—there is something in passing the senseless drunkard reeling home, and thinking that we have ceased to be one of the number who help him on his way to ruin—there is something

in these thoughts and feelings, so far beyond the common interests which pervade the mere etiquette of polished society, that if any one should ask me what they could have recourse to as a means of excitement to supply the want of wine, I should recommend them to try the excitement of joining heart and hand in the promotion of the temperance cause.

Persons deeply impressed with the importance of these subjects of profound interest, which are necessarily involved in the temperance question, are not likely to have their attention diverted from the main points of discussion, by any little inaccuracies of style or diction which occur in the public advocacy of the cause. Hence, it is possible, they may think less than some others do, of the particular manner in which that advocacy is maintained. It may naturally be supposed, however, to constitute rather an important objection with the refined and fastidious, when

not thus seriously impressed, that many public speakers on the temperance question are illiterate, and some of them injudicious men.

It is, however, a hard—I had almost said a cruel case, when respectable and enlightened individuals stand aloof from the cause for this reason; because if they and their associates of the same class would come forward in its support, there would no longer be any need to trust the management of temperance matters so much to the hands of ignorant or illiterate men. The absurdities of which they complain would then be done away with; the evils would be remedied; the objectors themselves teaching a more excellent way of influencing the people at large.

It seems strange, however, that the charge of absurdity should so often be brought forward against the temperate class. In my own ignorance, I should rather have supposed it attached to the opposite party, and that we

### **PRIVATE OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.**

our countenance to absurdity more effectually, by joining in the habit of drinking wine, than in identifying ourselves with those who abstain from such things altogether. I should have thought too in the same ignorance, that had we sought the world over for instances of absurdity, those which result from intoxication could not have been exceeded, in any of its different stages, from the first of excitement to the last of imbecility—from the buffoon in a country fair to the gentleman who leaves his wine at a late hour to make himself agreeable in the drawing-room to the ladies. I should have thought that to partake, even in a slight degree, of that which produces this absurdity in others, had been something like an approach to absurdity in ourselves. But the world is unquestionably a wise world, and these are enlightened times; and the opinion of individuals must give way before that of the many.

Again, respectable persons, and particu-

larly those who have to depend upon the ordinary and systematic operations of labourers and work-people, are very fond of saying that total abstinence is a *good thing for the poor*, and as such they often give it the advantage of their countenance to a certain extent. Even this acknowledgment is good, so far as it goes; and even this countenance is of use; for the poor are not so much accustomed to look to the rich for sympathy and encouragement, as to depend entirely upon that for their support; and in the temperance reformation more especially, they have learned a new lesson of reliance upon themselves. It would not seem very wonderful however, if the poor under such circumstances should sometimes retort upon us, and say—"If you who enjoy all the luxuries of life, and have no need of labour, cannot live without your wine; how can you expect a hard-working man, who has nothing else, to live without his beer?"



And this has been said many times, and would unquestionably be repeated much oftener than it is, did not some noble instances present themselves to our view, of wealthy and influential persons who have come forward practically and heartily to join in the cause, on the same footing as the poor, or at least, so far as circumstances would allow their situation to be the same; nor am I sure that they have lost anything of their importance, or their good influence in other respects, from such association. What they have gained in peace of mind, satisfaction, and happiness, can never be fully understood or appreciated by those who have only gone along with them to the extent of countenancing total abstinence as an *excellent thing for the poor*.

But there is another objection, which I speak of last; not because it is least important—quite the contrary; for I believe it to be beyond all comparison more important than any other, or than all others put together, in its

practical influence upon individual conduct. May it not rather be said to rule paramount in its wide-spreading power to deter both men and women of all classes—the old and the young—the rich and the poor—the good and the evil—from signing their names to the Temperance pledge? Indeed, this single ground of objection is of such overwhelming potency, that vast numbers who have overcome the self-denial, and who are now most scrupulous abstainers, would shrink from the bare idea of connecting themselves with a temperance society.

The fact is, they consider it *low*; and in that one word we read the sad and irretrievable doom of all those poor tempted ones, who would willingly sign the temperance pledge if any considerable number of the ladies or gentlemen of their acquaintance had done so.

In hearing this objection brought forward, which we do almost every day, and in detecting its secret influence, which we do still

more frequently, I have often wondered, as in the case of absurdity, what could be more *low* than the drinking practices of our country? It is true that in these, at least in their excess, the delicate and respectable part of the community do not immediately join; but the miserable and degrading practices themselves are evident to us, almost at every step, in walking the streets of our large towns; while often in the summer evening's ramble, those village sounds which poetry has ever loved to describe, are broken into discord by the mingling of insane laughter, and anger even more insane.

Now one surely would have thought, on the first view of the case, that a delicate-minded Christian lady, for instance, would, even on the ground of vulgarity, have chosen to regale herself with the same kind of stimulus which she knew to have produced these rude revels, and these inhuman sounds. But truly the science of re-

finement is a mysterious and profound one, and it needs the schooling of a lifetime to teach a common mind, how total abstinence from every thing that can intoxicate, is essentially more low, than to give our countenance, by the influence of habit, to that very practice which is associated with more vulgarity than any other now existing amongst mankind.

But, granting the reasonableness of throwing the stigma of vulgarity on the side of abstinence, there is a material difference betwixt joining with the low for the purpose of raising their moral character, and joining with them in the use of that which must necessarily make them lower still. The most fastidious of Christian ladies would scarcely hesitate to enter a village church because a great proportion of the congregation there consisted of the poor. No, she would rather welcome and encourage their attendance, as a means of rendering them more enlightened, and conse-

quently more refined; and if in the one case we believe that the influence of religion will effect this change, in the other we have reason to believe that the influence of total abstinence will at least effect a moral and physical amendment.

There is a class of individuals, and I have the privilege of being acquainted with one, who speak of every kind of wickedness as being merely in "bad taste," and consequently not worthy of their attention either in one way or another. Now although this may be a very comfortable way of passing over much that is painful in the aspect of this life; yet, for my own part, I envy not the drawing-room distinction of being ignorant that there is such a thing as vice existing in the world. And, knowing what we do know, and seeing what we must see, unless our physical as well as moral perceptions are strangely obscured, can we stand aloof and refuse to lend a helping hand to those who are perishing, because

it is not polite, or fashionable, or approved in the highest circles, to attempt to save them?

No one knows better than myself the pain of choosing such a theme as that which occupies these pages; and if it had not been sufficiently repugnant to my own feelings, there are kind friends who would have made it so, by their unsparing and uncharitable remarks, as if it had been a thing of mere pastime to write about the poor drunkard and his degradation. I would not, however, *willingly* exchange my humbling part for that which they take in this matter; for happier—far happier is the thought of doing nothing to accelerate the ruin of those who, from this fatal cause, are falling too rapidly around us, than of having thrown the weight of our influence, just so far as it *had* weight, on the side of an enemy already too powerful for the weak to conquer, or the tempted to resist.

To these, as well as all other objections to the operation of the temperance pledge, I

would say one word in conclusion. You cannot stop the progress of this cause, perhaps you would not if you could; why then attempt to wound its advocates? The enemy perchance is far from you. He may not yet have reached your family, or breathed a blight upon your name. But if the time should ever come when you or yours should fall beneath his power, who then will be the friends whose pity you will ask, whose protection you will claim? Will they not be those who have associated themselves zealously and cordially for the purpose of arresting the progress of this desolating vice, and of saving the victim of intemperance when he could not save himself; thus practically exemplifying the influence of true Christian charity?

The perfect harmony between efforts of this order, and the spirit and requirements of religion, have been recently so clearly and satisfactorily set forth by an enlightened and useful Christian minister in America, the

Rev. Albert Barnes, that I cannot better close the remarks I have offered, than by inserting the views of one so much better able than myself to do justice to this important subject:—

“Religion is the patron of every virtue, and calls to its aid every pure and generous feeling in the bosom of man. There is nothing large, liberal, generous, free and independent in the human soul, which religion is not designed to promote, and of which it does not become the patron and friend. If there is ever an apparent separation between religion and those things, or if religion ever seems to array itself against them, or to look on them with coldness or indifference, it is where its nature is perverted or misunderstood, or where narrow-minded bigotry has usurped the place of the large-hearted and generous principles of the New Testament. Something of this kind *may* sometimes exist by the want of a



proper spirit among the professed friends of religion; and it is *possible*, also, that the friends of what may be generous, and liberal, and valuable in a community, *may* mistake the nature of Christianity, and may cherish feelings towards it and towards the church, alike injurious to the cause of religion and to the ultimate success of the cause which they have at heart. Our inquiry relates now to the question, whether any of these things are operating in reference to the great and noble cause of temperance; and the first object I have in view is to suggest some causes which *may* have had this effect.

“ 1. The state of things in the Christian church, which prevented its coming up cordially and harmoniously to the temperance reformation. I refer to the fact that when that reformation commenced, there were many in the Christian churches engaged in the manufacture and sale of intoxicating drinks: that a large amount of capital was invested in the

business; that the members of the churches extensively were indulging habits quite at variance with what is now regarded as the proper rule of temperance; and that to a great extent the ministers of the Gospel were indulging in those habits, and partook of the common feeling. The consequences of such a state of things were inevitable, and were such as could have been easily anticipated. The churches came up slow to the work. It was a work, not of a day, but of time, to change the usages of society, and to convince men that what had been practised constantly without any doubt of its propriety, was wrong. It was no easy matter to withdraw capital from a lucrative business, or to convince men that an employment was morally wrong in which they had been trained, and which had been followed without suspicion of impropriety by their fathers. It was not found easy for the ministers of the Gospel to speak out on the

subject in clear and unambiguous language; and when it was done, it was often attended with alienation and a removal from their charges. Changes in society are not soon made; and reformation is always especially difficult when that which is to be corrected and removed has a connexion with religion. Evils are always ramified in society, and interlocked with each other, and often interlocked with good. Sin winds its way along by many a serpentine and subterranean passage into the church, and entwines its roots around the altar, and assumes new vigour of growth, and a kind of sacredness, by its connexion there. It was so with the cause of intemperance in the community, and the consequences to which I now refer of this state of things could not be well avoided. One was, the necessity of forming an organization *out* of the church to do what should have been done *in* it—to get up an independent society, having for its object not only

to remove the evil, but also the design of influencing the ministers and members of the church to do what they would not otherwise do—of spurring on its lagging ministers by reproaches, and scourging the church into her duty by an indignant public sentiment.

“2. The customs still practised in the church, and the opinions advocated by some of the friends of religion, have in like manner tended to alienate the friends of temperance. After all the advances which have been made in the cause, it cannot be denied that sentiments are sometimes advanced, and that practices are continued in some portions of the church, which are fitted greatly to try the feelings of the friends of temperance. There are not a few, it is undeniable, among the ministers of the Gospel and the members of the churches, who do not come up as fully and heartily to the work as the friends of temperance desire or think to be

proper. There are not a few who are reluctant to sign the pledge; there are those who continue the traffic in ardent spirits; there are those who strenuously advocate the *right* to drink wine, and occasionally some distinguished minister of the Gospel, or professor in a college or seminary, comes forth with a learned and laboured argument to prove that its use is sanctioned by the Bible, and to array himself against what most of the friends of temperance regard now as settled axioms about the use of all that can intoxicate. The *effect* of this on the minds of many of the advocates for temperance is almost inevitable. It is to produce a coldness against all such churches, church-members, and ministers of the Gospel, and to make them feel that their cause must be advocated by themselves, in a great measure, if not altogether, independent of religion.

“3. There has been a tendency, on the other hand, to alienation arising from the

views of some of the advocates of temperance. Not a few of the friends of religion, and among them undoubtedly many warm friends of temperance, have regarded the tendency in that cause to be to push matters to *extremes*.

“4. Among the friends of temperance there has been observed a slight tendency to separate themselves from religion, by a dread entertained by some of them that Christians meant to make the temperance reformation a sectarian thing. The *reasons* of this have been, that Christians, when they have advocated the cause, have endeavoured strongly to do it on *religious principles*; that they have appealed largely to the Bible; that they have dwelt much on the fact that intemperance endangered the souls of men; that they have felt that there was a propriety that the meetings for temperance should be opened with prayer; and they have sought, as it is undeniable they have, to make the progress of

temperance tributary to the furtherance of the Gospel. It remains yet, however, to be proved that any denomination of Christians has sought to promote its peculiar views, or to advance its own sectarian interests, by means of this cause. Yet any one can see that while the apprehension exists, there may be so far a tendency to alienate many of the friends of temperance from those of religion.

“5. I mention one other cause which may have operated to some extent, and which I desire to do with as much delicacy as possible. I may be wrong in supposing that it has ever produced the effect supposed, and perhaps it should be thrown out rather as having a tendency to what *may be*, than as affirming what *is*. It relates to the large numbers of those who have been recently reformed from intemperance, and who have been organized into societies for the reformation of inebriates. The tendency to which I refer as *possible*, is that of supposing that

*this* is about *all* which they need. So great and surprising has been the change in their feelings and lives; so invaluable are the blessings which temperance has conferred on them, that they may fall into the belief that this will do every thing for them, and that they need nothing further to promote their salvation here and hereafter. To them the change is as life from the dead. It has re-invigorated their health; saved them from deep degradation, poverty, and misery; restored the husband and father in his right mind to his wife and children; created anew for him the comforts of a virtuous home; given him respectability in the view of the community; opened before him the prospect of wealth and honour in his profession; made him, in short, a renovated being, with new powers, new faculties, new hopes, new prospects in reference to this life; and how natural it may be that the dangerous feeling should silently insinuate itself into the soul,



that that wonderful power which has done so much for the present life will also carry its influence forward beyond the grave, and do every thing needful for the renovated man in the world to come.

“My object is not to shew that there should be *union in every thing*; or that every temperance society should be a church; or that there should be no diversity of opinion as to the reasons why intemperance should be opposed; or that in no respect the friends of these two causes should pursue distinct objects; but that there is *common ground* on which they may act, and that in the promotion of temperance on the strictest principles there should be no alienation of feeling and no discord of views. In support of this proposition I urge the following considerations:

“1. The first is, that there is *common ground* on which the friends of temperance and of religion may act, and act without any collision. It is of necessity that Christians

*must* act in many things in connexion with those who do not profess to be governed by religious principles. The church is *in* the world. Its members are not to be required to become hermits or monks, or to seclude themselves in cloisters and in caves; nor is the world in its important interests to be deprived of the co-operation and the counsel of the friends of the Redeemer. There is a vast field in regard to education, to public improvements, to commerce, to government, to the execution of the laws, to the amelioration of human misery, and to the preservation of liberty, in which they have a common interest with their fellow-men, and where they must act in connexion and concert with them. They may have, and should have, their own motives in doing this, and by whatever views others may be actuated, *they* should be influenced by a desire to honour their Maker, and to promote the glory of their great Saviour, and the good

of man. Valuable as is the organization of the church, and vital as it is to the best interests of man, *yet it is not organized for every thing*, nor are we to suppose that it is to be unconcerned, *as such*, in the promotion of every important object.

“Now there is no other subject that affords so wide a field where the friends of temperance and religion can act together, as the cause of temperance. The *real* interest in this cause is common. Its promotion is vital to the welfare of the church, and to the preservation of every good object in the land. It is a field, too, where the church cannot accomplish all that is needful to be done, and where there is need of the combined effort of all the friends of virtue to secure the great and noble object. It is a field where, if she chooses, the church may employ all the *peculiar* power of appeal entrusted to her—drawn from the worth of the soul, the commands of God, the character and work of the Redeemer,

and the Retributions of the world to come; where, at the same time, the patriot may urge all the considerations, derived from the love of country, which occur to his mind; the physician all the considerations which result from health; the defender of the laws, all those derived from the importance of observing the statutes of the land; and the philosopher, and the moralist, all the considerations which result from the healthful action of the soul, and the importance of pure morality in any community. So far-spread are the evils of intemperance, that there is no well-wisher of his country who may not appropriately be an advocate for the cause of temperance; and each may come with the arguments which most affect his own mind. Nor should there be any collision. The clergyman should deem it no act of impropriety if the physician urges the bearing of temperance on the health of the body; nor the statesman, if the clergyman urges his plea because intemperance will ruin

the soul; nor any one, if all the considerations drawn, by their respective advocates, from health, happiness, a clear intellect, pure morals, and the hope of heaven, are urged as reasons why men should be temperate. It is common ground; and all these considerations bear, *in fact*, appropriately on the cause, and are all needed to secure its triumph.

“2. The second consideration which I urge is, that the church has no reason to dread the influence of the sternest principles of temperance, and should be their warm and decided advocate. Its members should, by the fact of membership, be known as the friends of abstinence from all that intoxicates; and the ministry should lift up an unambiguous voice in regard to the manufacture and the traffic in all intoxicating drinks, and in regard to all that sanctions the custom of using them as a beverage in the community. Permit me to suggest a few reasons why every minister and member of the church should be thus decided

and firm—decided in opinion, and firm in example—in regard to all that can intoxicate.

“The first is, that the church should be the patron and example of all that tends to purify and elevate man. Her appropriate province relates to “*whatsoever* things are true, *whatsoever* things are honest, *whatsoever* things are just, *whatsoever* things are pure, *whatsoever* things are lovely, and *whatsoever* things are of good report;” (Phil. iv. 8.) and in whatever tends to promote these things she should claim the privilege to bear her part.

“The second reason is, that the great thing which has opposed religion in the world has been intemperance. Probably all other causes put together have not offered so decided and so effectual a resistance to the Gospel of Jesus as intoxicating drinks. Nothing from within has so much operated to bring the church and its members into contempt and disgrace, and nothing from without has created so many barriers against the progress

of religion. Not all other vices combined have robbed the church of so many talented and learned ministers of the Gospel as intemperance; every other cause has not furnished so much necessity for discipline, or given so much occasion to the enemies of the Lord to speak reproachfully. Neither war, nor pestilence, nor famine, has cut down so many sons of the church, baptized in the name of Jesus, and consecrated by prayer to the service of the Lord; nor has any thing else caused so many hearts of Christian wives to bleed, or so many Christian fathers and mothers to weep over their ruined hopes in regard to their sons. The history of the pulpit in this land, in days that are past, and the history of the members of the church, would be, if it were written, a most melancholy history. The most deadly foe to religion in the church has been connected with this habit of indulgence in strong drink; and from without,

where do we meet with more enemies? What is the foe that has met us everywhere? It is found in this insidious and fascinating poison—in the state of mind which it produces, and the habits of idleness and vice which it engenders—in its power in excluding men from the sanctuary, and consigning them to the grave and throwing them for ever beyond the reach of mercy. And can a friend of the holy Saviour be otherwise than a steady patron of that which will destroy this mighty foe of all that we hold good?

“ Thirdly, God has made the temperance cause an auxiliary to religion, and the Christian should be its friend. It has been called, with great force, and without impropriety, “ The John the Baptist,” as if it were again to introduce the Gospel to the world. Every thing in its movements may be made tributary, and there is no good reason why it should not be, to all that is dear to the heart of the Christian. Temperance makes no in-



fidels, no atheists, no sceptics, no profane men, no Sabbath-breakers, no deriders of the Bible. It lays no sacrilegious hands on the altar of God, breaks up no assemblies for worship, and disrobes none of the ministers of religion. It makes war on no Sabbath Schools and no Bible Societies, and no effort to send the Gospel around the globe. Why, then, should any professing Christian ever stand aloof from the cause, or regard it with coldness and suspicion? But, farther, ~~the~~ cause has not merely these *negative* virtues in regard to religion. It takes away from the human soul that which was most decidedly opposed to the Gospel. *It leaves the intellect clear to perceive the truth*, and restores the conscience to its power of speaking out in favour of God. When ~~the~~ Saviour was upon earth, there met him a man that dwelt among the tombs, whom no one could bind, and who, possessed of a legion of devils, wandered in the mountains, a miserable, infuriated maniac. By a word,

Jesus restored him to the possession of reason, and he that *was* possessed was seen sitting, clothed in his right mind, near to the Saviour. (Mark v. 1—17). The same thing, to some extent, temperance has done for multitudes. It has restored them to their right mind: it has clothed them, and disposed them to sit down to receive instruction.

“A fourth consideration why the friends of religion should be the warm and decided friends of the temperance cause is, that that cause has done much to purify the ranks of the church itself, and is destined yet to do much more. No one can be ignorant of the fact that, in this respect, the churches in this land are in quite a different state from what they were twenty-five years ago, and that in the habits of members and ministers there have been great and salutary changes. In our own age nothing has occurred that has contributed more to the purity of the church than the temperance reformation; and were no *other*

results to follow from it, it would be worth all the effort which has been made, and all the money which has been expended, to have secured this result alone.

“There may be difference of opinion on the question whether the use of wine is forbidden in the sacred Scriptures—whether the wines of Palestine were or were not fermented—whether as a common beverage they were or were not attended with danger—and whether the wine which the Saviour made at Cana, and that of which he commonly partook, had the common properties of the fermented juice of the grape—and whether to abstain from the use of wine be a mere matter of expediency, or be a matter of moral obligation. Let these continue to be topics of friendly discussion. Let travellers make further reports. Let the language of the Scriptures be further investigated. Let books be written, and speeches made, and sermons preached, and ancient customs be more fully investigated.

But in the mean time, assuredly Christians may *agree* on such points as the following, and such agreement will practically settle the question. I mean—that the use of wine as a beverage is nowhere *enjoined* in the Scripture, or made a test of discipleship, or a part of the duty of religion; that no injury will occur by total abstinence: that the wines of Palestine, whether fermented or unfermented, were *materially* unlike the manufactured wines of this country; that these wines are in general a miserable compound of deleterious articles, sustaining no more relation to the vine than any other of the drinks that intoxicate; that they possess the intoxicating quality in a high degree, and that the intoxicating quality is the same as in any other liquor that produces this effect, and is, like that, alcohol; that the use of wine by professing Christians, and by ministers of the Gospel, is highly injurious by example, and is that to which men constantly appeal to keep themselves in coun-

tenance; that in fact the principal danger among the young men of our cities and towns, and especially among those who claim to be of the higher classes, is from the use of what is called *wine*—and that as a consequence of that use, *sustained as they are to some extent by the example of professing Christians*, multitudes of them are on their way to the grave of the drunkard. Under circumstances like these, and with admitted facts like these, is it well, is it expedient, for the friends of religion to advocate their use, or to patronize it by their example? Let them have their own views about the reasons for abstaining—whether from expediency, or from the conviction of right and of conscience—yet *in the thing itself* may there not be, and should there not be, harmony of action? and are not those who love the Saviour bound to set their faces against any form of an evil which, in days that are past, has robbed the church of many who might have lived to bless it by their

talents and piety—which, every year, has consigned its tens of thousands to the grave—which has filled our prisons and almshouses with convicts and paupers, and which more than any thing else has spread poverty, and woe, and mourning over the land? What should a Christian have to do with customs which, *by any possibility*, can lead to such results?

“ I add only one other consideration to the friends of temperance. It is, that the God of Providence and of the Bible, is the advocate and the friend of this cause. He who rules the world by his power, and who has given laws for the government of mankind in his word, frowns on intemperance, alike in the poverty, and woe, and sorrow which he sends as his messengers of vengeance here, and in his denunciations of wrath in the world to come. The most stern and uncompromising friend of temperance may take shelter under the pro-

tection of the God of the Bible and of Providence, and may feel assured that while he presses his principles to the extent of entire abstinence from all that intoxicates, he is counteracting none of the precepts of the Bible, but is carrying them out, and illustrating them in his life. On this common field, then—this vast, this glorious field—let the friends of religion and of temperance act in concert. The friend of religion has the deepest interest in the triumphs of this cause, and has nothing to dread from it. The friend of temperance has had the most firm and eloquent advocates of his principles among the friends of religion, and will find them efficient advocates still. Both, when they act in this cause, are acting in accordance with the great laws of the God of *nature* and of *grace*, and may feel that in doing this they are doing that which tends to the honour of God, and welfare of men; and both may feel that so

far from being discordant in any way, the friends of religion and temperance should be united in the promotion of this common cause —this great and glorious enterprise.”







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